

Exhaustive Notes

ON

Intermediate Poetry Selections

(C. Mahajan)

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Price

1945

Rs. 2/8

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N. B—The following poems have been excluded
by Rajputana Board.

1. The Lake Isle of Innisfree.
2. Sea-Waves.

INTRODUCTION

I

1. What is Poetry.—

It is needless to state and examine the definitions of poetry advanced by critics from time to time, as none of them is complete. The qualities which belong to poetry are the following:—

(i) **Imagination.**—Imagination is essential for poetry. The poet idealises by his imagination the incidents of human life and the objects in external nature.

(ii) **Appeal to the aesthetic emotions.**—True poetry appeals to man's aesthetic emotions or the feeling of the beautiful. In this respect poetry differs from science. The scientist arrives at truth by analysis and experiment, a calm logical process however unpleasant the task may be. The poet, on the other hand, excludes everything that is displeasing. He is an inspired person who works under the stress of great emotions. His expressions are coloured by his feelings and produce in the reader's mind a similar emotional experience sympathetically.

(iii) **Preference for the concrete.**—The poet has a preference for the concrete reader than the abstract. The abstract notions are employed by logicians and fail to appeal to our emotions. The mere ideas are cold. The poet clothes their ideas in a concrete tangible shape.

(iv) **Metrical language.**—Opinions differ as regards the necessity of metre for poetry. Some critics including Shelley thought that metre was not essential for poetry. If a composition roused in its reader the feeling of pleasure it was poetry. Thus Dr. Rabindranath Tagore's *Gitanjali*, with its inspiring thoughts, is poetry. The modern criticism holds that poetry cannot exist without metre. Poetry is an art and it expresses rhythmic emotion, an emotion which is other than the thought of everyday life. "Meter shows that one is in another realm from the realm of prose, of daily life." Metre leaves the rhythm uninterrupted through the lines of the poem where as prose jars and jerks and distorts it. Metrical expression is fundamental to poetry. The compositions which are full of imagination and emotion but not expressed in metrical or regular rhythmical language are called poetic prose.

2. Classification of Poetry.—

It is difficult to classify the various forms of poetry as there are many standpoints from which the division may be made. One may divide poems on the basis of subject-matter, another on the basis of form, and yet another on the principal of leading motives in poems. For our purpose it is safe to accept the most commonly recognized division into three classes; *Lyrical*, *Narrative* and *Dramatic*.

(i) **Lyrical or Subjective Poetry.**—In non-dramatic kind "Lyrical" and "Narrative" poems are spoken of as "Subjective" or "Personal" and "Objective" or "Impersonal." The Lyrical poem are called Subjective because they express the thoughts, feelings and experiences of the poet himself. The poet steep his theme in his own individually. Thus the *Sonnets* of Shakespeare and Milton are subjective because in them we can trace their author's sensations and views. Hymns, Patriotic songs, Love lyrics, Elegy, Ode and Sonnet are the principal lyric forms.

(ii) **Narrative or Objective Poetry.**—When a poet describes the incidents, the actions and sentiments of his fellowmen, not his own, he is regarded as an *objective* or *impersonal* poet. He does not talk of his own emotions. His principal function is to narrate what has happened. Narrative verse is entirely impersonal except for the element of personality which he conveys to it by his language and style. Homer's *Iliad* is a great narrative poem. Narrative Poetry includes the Epic, Ballad, Allegory, Parable, Fable, Myth, Pastoral Poetry, Idylls and all other narrative compositions.

Here a word of caution is necessary. It is impossible to draw a sharp line between the two kinds of non-dramatic poetry. No poet however impersonal the theme can dissociate from his work.

Narrative poetry is sub-divided into the ballad, the epic, didactic poetry and the descriptive verse.

(a) The Ballad—

Ballad is derived from the French word *baller*, which means to dance, and originally meant a song to which one could dance. In England, the term has been applied to a narrative in simple rhymed verse. The primitive ballad expressed the feelings of the people about some incident or event, and was the work of bards rather than of scholars.

The chief quality of the genuine old ballad is its simplicity and its artlessness. The opening is abrupt. In a ballad no moral is drawn, no analysis of feeling attempted and no detailed ornament given. It, appeals by its rapidity of rhythm, its plainness of thought, plainness of diction and its inherent feeling of nobility.

Ballads were most commonly written in the ballad meter. It is a four-lined stanza, the first and third lines of which

have four iambic feet, and commonly rhyme together, and the second and fourth have three iambic feet and always rhyme together. A b a b is the rhythmic arrangement. The most perfect example of this measure is Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*.

(b) The Epic.—

Epic means spoken or recited verse. It is a long poem telling the story of some adventure or struggle which affects the whole nation. The epic is of two kinds: (a) the early epics—like the Mahabharat and the Iliad which were handed down during successive generations by word of mouth, (b) the literary epics—are the works of single authors.

The epic is (1) a narrative poem, (2) of supposed divine inspiration, (3) treating of a subject of great importance for mankind, (4) the characters of the story are partly human and partly divine, and (5) the language and style in which the incidents are full of elevation and dignity. Milton's *Paradise Lost*—is a great epic poem.

(c) Didactic Poetry.—

Another class of narrative verse is what is called didactic verse. A didactic poem contains a moral. Pope's *Essay on Criticism*—is a purely didactic verse.

(d) The Descriptive Verse.—

Descriptive verse show us the subjects and scenes as though they were painted before our eyes. Descriptions find place in every kind of poetical composition. James Thomson's *Seasons*, Goldsmith's *Traveller*—and *Deserted Village* are descriptive poems.

3. Dramatic Poetry.—

Drama is to be found in both prose and poetry. It is intended to be acted on the stage. The two principal divisions of the drama are Tragedy and Comedy.

(i) Tragedy.—

A tragedy represents an important and serious action, the ending of which is, as a rule, unhappy and disastrous to the hero. Shakespeare's tragedies, are well-known.

(ii) Comedy.—

Comedy is opposed to tragedy. It is intended to provoke language, not tears, and to present amusing, not a grave view of life.

FIGURES OF SPEECH

II

A figure of speech is a deviation from the ordinary mode of expression so that the ideas may be expressed with force and clearness. It also serves as an ornament to beautify the expression. Some of the most important figures of speech are given below:—

1. A **Simile** expresses the likeness between two dissimilar objects. It employs the word 'as' or 'like' to express the comparison. "He is stubborn as an ox" is a simile.

2. A **Metaphor** is a condensed simile. It dispenses with the use of 'like' or 'as.' "He is a stubborn ox" is a metaphor.

3. **Metonymy** is a figure of speech which, though not nearly so common as metaphor and simile is often employed by the poets. Metonymy is the substitution of one word for another. When we say "We enjoy Keats" we mean we enjoy the writings of Keats. "Keats" is used for "Writings."

4. **Synecdoche** is actually that figure in which a part is used for the whole, the detail is used to suggest the entire thing. "A fleet of fifty sails" (ships.)

5. Personification is that figure by which under the influence of strong feeling, we attribute life and mind to impersonal and inanimate things. Thus we speak of *pale* Fear, *green-eyed* Jealousy, the Winds *whisper*.

6. An Allegory is a continuous personification in the form of a story with a hidden meaning. Bunyan's "The Pilgrim's Progress" is a long allegory in prose.

7. Hyperbole or Exaggeration is a figure by which more is said than is literally true. This is the result of very strong emotion. "Strong as the lion and swift as the eagle."

8. Oxymoron is the association of two apparently contradictory terms. James I was called "the wisest fool in Christendom "

9. Climax expresses the culmination reached by gradual steps. It means ladder : "To put a Roman citizen in chains is a crime; to put him to death is a parricide." The opposite of this is anticlimax.

10. Onomatopocia occurs when the sound of the words conveys the sense crash, buzz and hiss are such words.

PROSODY ✓

III

Prosody is that branch of Grammar which treats of the laws of versification. Verse comes from the Latin *versa*, turned. *Oratio versa* was "turned speech"—that is, when the line came to an end, the writer had to begin a new line. The length of a line in a verse is determined by the poet. In prose the line may be of any length. Verse differs from

prose in two points—(i) in the regular recurrence of accents; and (ii) in the proportion of unaccented to accented syllables. Thus in the line.

"The curfew tolls the knell of parting day."

The accents occur regularly in every second syllable.

The English verse consists of lines. Each line of verse has a fixed number of accents, and each accent has a fixed number of unaccented syllables attached to it. Let us take the following line from "Ah, Sweet Content."

"The minds and hearts of every living thing."

The line contains five accents: the accented syllable comes last; each accented syllable has one unaccented attached to it.

Now, let us take another example;—

"Shall the harp then be silent when he who first gave,"

The line contains four accented syllables and each accented syllable has two unaccented attached to it.

The accented syllable comes last.

One accented syllable with one or two unaccented, taken together makes a *foot*. A foot is the unit of verse.

A foot is generally disyllabic or of two syllables or trisyllabic or the three syllables. The most common feet are (1) Iamb, (2) Trochee, (3) Anapaest and (4) Dactyl.

Iamb (Gr. *iaptein*...to throw) if the accent falls on the second of the two syllables in the foot, the foot, is called an iambic foot (u—) and the whole line is said to be in iambic meter or measure:—

"Who loves/not more/the night/of June?"

Than dull/Decem/ber's gloom/of noon?"

2. ✓ *Trochee* (Gr. trochaïos—tripping) if the accent falls on the first syllables of the two syllables in a foot the foot is called a trochee (u—).

“Rich the/treasure.

Sweet the/pleasure,

Sweet is/pleasure/after/pain.”

The great bulk of English verse is made up of these two measures, and the iambic is the more commonly used.

3. ✓ *Anapaest*—(Gr. ana—back, paio—I strike) A foot of three syllables with the accent on the last is known as the anapaest (uu—):—

“From the winds/of the north and south.”

4. ✓ *Dactyl*—(Gr. daktylos—a finger) a foot of three syllables with an initial accent is called the dactyl (—uu):—

“Shadows of/beauty !

Shadows of/power

Rise to your/duty—

This is the/hour.”

Besides these four most common feet there are four or five others which are not so commonly used. They are, however, given below :—

1. *Spondee*—A foot in which both the syllables are accented is called the spondee (— —). Such a foot is occasionally substituted in place of an iamb in the following line, in which the fifth foot is a spondee.

“Yet tames/not this/it strikes/to our/last sand.”

2. *Pyrrhic*—A foot in which both the syllables are unaccented is called the pyrrhic (u u). The pyrrhic foot may supply the place of an iamb as indicated below ;—

“Has made/the fa/ther of/a name/less race.”

The third foot in the above line is a pyrrhic.

3. Amphibrach—A foot of three syllables in which the middle is accented is known of the amphibrach (U.—U.)

"Because he/has never/a hand/that/is idle."

This line may also be scanned as anapaestic if the first foot is taken as an iambus.

"Because/he has never a hand that is idle."

4. Amphimacer—This foot consists of three syllables of which the first and third are accented but the middle is unaccented (—U—). It is rarely found in English poetry.

5. Tribrach—Some metrists recognize another trisyllabic foot in scanning blank verse in which all the three syllables are unaccented(U U U) but this is vigorously contested by others.

The following lines from S. T. Coleridge give the characteristics of various kinds of foot :—

"Trochee taips from long to short.

From long to long in solemn sort,

Slow spondee walk; strong foot ! Yet ill able.

Ever to come up with Dactyl trisyllable.

Iambics march from short to long :—

With a leap and a bound the swift anapaest throng.

One syllable long, with one short at each side.

Amphibrachys haste with a stately stride—

First and last being long, middle short. Amphi-
macer.

Strikes his thundering hoofs like a proud highbred
racer."

The following table will make the point clear :—

No. 1

Foot.	Accents.	Metre.
Iamb	U—	Iambic
Trochee	—U	Trochaic
Anapaest	UU—	Anapaestic
Dactyl	—UU	Dactylic

No. 2

Occasional Feet.

Spondee	— —
Pyrrhic	U U
Amphibrach	U—U
Amphimacer	—U—
Tribrach	U U U

"Each of these measures has its own peculiar effect. The terminal stress expresses a sense of labour and difficulties to be overcome. With the initial stress the note changes to one of exhilaration and assurance. Triple measure usually gives the effect of speed, whether the foot is dactylic or anapaestic. A jiggling measure ill suits a solemn theme, and the poet's ear usually leads him to choose the form that best expresses his intention. In some poems the author clearly varies the rhythm of his lines to suit the changes in meaning or atmosphere."

Kind of Metre.—

The number of feet in each line of a poem may vary from one to eight. The names used for them in classical prosody are the following :—

(1) Monometer	Verse of one foot
(2) Diameter	Verse of two feet
(3) Trimeter	Verse of three feet
(4) Tetrameter	Verse of four feet
(5) Pentameter	Verse of five feet
(6) Hexameter	Verse of six feet
(7) Heptameter	Verse of seven feet
(8) Octameter	Verse of eight feet

Thus for example, the following iambic lines:—

1. Thus I.
Pass by (iambic monometre).
2. I had/forgot.
Myself/and thee. (iambic dimeter).
3. Have mer/cy lord/on me. (iambic trimeter).
4. By forms/unseen/their dirge/is sung. (iambic tetrameter).
5. And waste/its sweet/ness on/the desert/air. (iambic pentameter.)
6. All clad/in Lin/coln green/with caps/of red/and blue. (iambic hexameter).
7. And none/will grieve/when I/go forth/or smile/when I/return. (iambic heptameter).

The verse of this meter are sometimes broken up and painted in alternate four and three feet iambics, thus forming ballad meter. (For ballad meter see the section on Stanza Form).

8. Where vir/tue wants/and vice/abounds there wealth/is but/a bait/a bait/ed hook. (iambic octameter). This meter is very rare.

Similarly with trychee etc.

Mixed Meters.

- (A) There are sometimes combinations of the different

measures in a poem. The simplest of these are the iamb with anapaest and the trochee with dactyl.

1. *Iambic with anapaest.*

My life/is cold/and dark/and drear/y.
It rains/and the wind/is near wear/y.

2. *Trochee with dactyl.*

Merrily./ merrily/shall I/live now.
Under the/blossom that/hangs on the bough.

3. *Iambic and trochee.*

When the/lamp is/shattered.
The light in the mud/lies dead.

(B) Sometimes one kind of foot is substituted for another.

1. An Anapaest for an iamb :

The pace/grew hot,/for the scent/lay well,
Here the third foot is an anapaest.

2. A spondee for an iamb:—

The plain/rough he/ro turn/a craf/ty knave
The second foot is a spondee.

3. A pyrrhic foot for an iamb:—

The dull/flat false/hood services/for po/lity
The last foot is a pyrrhic.

4. A trochee for a dactyl

Shadows of/beauty
The second foot is a trochee.

5. An iamb for an anapaest.

For death/was a difficult/trade, and the sword was a broker of doom.

Here an iamb is substituted for an anapaest in the first foot.

6. A dactyl for a trochee.

Not a/fluttering/zephyr/springs
Here the second foot is a dactyl.

There are some other variations:

1. Anacrusis—

In trochaic or dactylic metres an additional unaccented syllable is allowed before the first foot of a line to which the term anacrusis has been applied:—

(i) The/Queen was/in the/garden.

(ii) A/las for the/rarity.

The first syllable in the above two lines is an anacrusis.

2. Catalexis—

In trochaic or dactylic metres the unaccented syllable or syllables at the end are dropped and the line is then called catalectic:—

(i) Dreadful/gleams' ×

(ii) Under/the sun × ×

In the first line the last foot has lost the final unaccented syllable, and in the second the last two are missing.

3. Hypermetrical syllables—

When at the end of a line there are unaccented syllables they are called hypermetrical or extrametrical:—

A thing/of beau/ty is/a/joy/for ev/er

The last unaccented syllable 'er' is hypermetrical.

STANZA FORMS

Rhymed verses are divided into stanzas.

1. A *Coup'et* is a stanza of two lines with the last words in each line rhyming. Two lines of five iambic feet make a heroic couplet.

Honour/and shame/from no/condition rise:
Act/well your part./there all/the hon/our lies.

2. A *Quatrain* is a stanza of four lines:

I hold it true, whar-e'er befall,
I feel it when I sorrow most.
" 'Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than nevet to have loved at all."

Elegiac stanza.—Four heroics or lines of five iambic feet rhyming alternately as in Grey's "Elegy" constitute the elegiac stanza.

3. *Spenserian stanza*.—This is a stanza of eight lines of iambic pentameter followed by an Alexandrine or iambic hexameter. Spenser's "Faery Queen" is written in Spenserian stanza.

4. *Ballad Meter*.—This is a stanza in which there are four lines with iambic tetrameter and trimeter alternating.

5. *Blank Verse*.—Verse without rhyme is blank verse. It is usually in iambic pentameters: Epics and dramatic poetry are mostly written in blank verse.

6. *Free Verse*.—Or "verse libre" is based upon cadence rather than upon actual meter. It gets its effects through subtle shades of changing rhythms and through a delicate sense of balance.

7. *Lyric*.—Originally a Lyric was a song, sung to the accompaniment of a lyre. A lyre is a stringed instrument very much like our *sitar* or guitar. The songs celebrated the heroic deeds of the warriors or sang the praises of the Almighty and were recited by minstrels or *bhats*. By lyric poetry, now we understand poems which delineate poet's own thoughts and feelings, as opposed to narrative and dramatic kind.

Characteristics of English Lyrics.—

1. *Subjectivity*.—The lyric is a peculiarly personal thing. The stimulus comes to the poet himself and directly or indirectly he reveals himself in the poem. It becomes in a way a mirror of himself. If you read the poems on the skylark by Wordsworth and Shelley you find that both the lyrics are characteristic of their author's temperament and character. As the lyric is subjective and embodies the person at experience of a poet it is emotional. It has been defined by an eminent critic as a single emotion temperamentally expressed in terms of poetry.

2. *Unity*.—Another distinguishing mark of the lyric is its unity. It is self-contained and is directly related to one idea. Palgrave in the preface to the "Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics" says that a lyric has "single thought, feeling, or situation." The idea is an emotion of the poet which lasts only for a few moments. If emotion lasts for so short a period a lengthy poem is a record of a number of emotions. The lyrics therefore are short poems.

3. *Structure of the lyric*.—The lyrics though divided into five different groups; the song lyric, the sonnet, the idyll and the elegy have common principle of structure. All good lyrics have three parts.

(i) *Motive*.—That which arouse the emotion of the poetic, Wordsworth's "Daffodils," the poet first presents to us a picture of the Daffodils.

(ii) *Thought suggested by the motives*.—The object or motive gives rise to a feeling or thought of the poet which forms the second part of the lyric. It is his emotional experience.

(iii) *Intellectual conclusion*.—It is the final division of the lyric and expresses the final attitude of the poet on a subject when his emotion subsides. It is in the form of conclusion or reflection.

4. *Nusical character*.—The lyric was originally sung to the accompaniment of a lyre. It has preserved its musical

quality even to this day. The lyrics of Shelley are the most musical compositions in literature.

Form of a Lyric—

The Lyric poetry as has already been said divided itself into five principle classes.

1. *The song Lyric*.—It is "a short poem adopted for singing and sometimes actually set to music, or a metrical composition musical in itself, though neither fitted nor especially designed for singing otherwise than 'in the heart'" —alternates corresponding to the two classes (Vocal and Literary song lyrics). The songs in Shakespeare's dramas, Ben Jonson's *To Celia* and *Hymn to Diana*, R. Herrick's *To Daffodils*, Waller's *Go Lovely Rose*, J. Gay's *Black Eyed Susan*, Burns's *Lyrics* and Wordsworth's *Daffodils* are some of the best song *Lyrics* in English literature.

2. *The Ode*—The Ode originally was the same thing at the song and was sung to music. The modern Ode is no longer to be sung. "It is a dignified, serene and sometimes majestic lyric, not acutely personal in its note, and dealing with one sustained and exalted or lofty meditative theme of general import. The *Odes* are divided into two classes (1) *Regular Ones*—which observe some definite rules of structure (2) *Irregular Odes*—which follow no uniform metrical plan. Thomas Gray's *The Progress of Poetry*, Wordsworth's *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Childhood*, Shelley's *To a Skylark*, *The Westwind*, and *To Autumn*, Keat's *To a Nightingale* are the finest *Odes* in English poetry.

The Idyll.—The word idyll means 'a little picture.' It is generally short and it must be a picture. The idyll depicts the simple type of life, the life of the fields, villages and humble citizen in a simple style. John Dyer's *Grongar Hill* and Tennyson's *Idyll* are well-known.

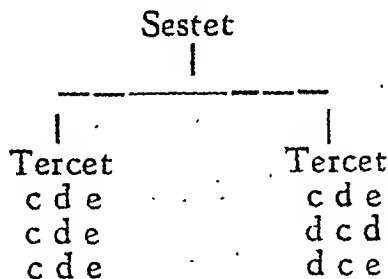
3. *The Elegy*.—The modern elegy is a mournful or plaintive poem; in the form of a lament for the dead, most often, the metre often employed is the simple quatrain of

iambic lines in alternate rhyme used by Gray in his *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*. This stanza is known as "Elegiac quatrain." Milton's *Lycidas*, Gray's *Elegy Written in a country Churchard* and Shelley's *Adonais* are some of the finest poems of this class.

4. *Sonnet*.—The *sonnet* derives its name from the Italian *Sonnetto*, a little sound or strain and was originally a short poem sung or recited to the accompaniment of music. Now it has no longer the characteristic of musical accompaniment but is only a short poem. It has only one idea or thought throughout the poem.

5. *The Structure of the Sonnet*.—The Sonnet consists of fourteen iambic decasyllabic lines, *i. e.*, each line has ten syllables divided into five feet of two syllables, each of which the first syllable is unaccented and the second accented. The fourteen lines are divided into two parts. The first part has eight lines, and the second only six: technically called the *octavo* and *estet* respectively. The *octavo* is sub-divided into two *quatrains* or sets of four lines each, and the *sestet* is divided into two *tercets* or sets of three lines each.

Rhyme Scheme of the Sonnet.—The rhyme scheme of the *octave* is fixed:—*a b b a a b b a*, that is, the first line rhymes with the fourth, fifth and eighth and the second line with the third, sixth and seventh. The rhyme arrangement in the *sestet* varies of which three frequent forms are as follows;—



Thought-structure of the Sonnet.

The Sonnet deals with one thought and forms one unit. The *octavo* enunciates an idea which the *sestet* illustrates or

completes. The normal form of the Sonnet is variously known as the Italian, Classical or Petrarchan type and its most distinguished English poet is Milton. The following table will make the point clear:—

ITALIAN OR PETRARCHAN TYPE

Octavo		Sestet	
Quatrain	Quatrain	Tercet	Tercet
a b b a	a b b a	c d e	c d e
a b b a	a b b a	c d e	d c e
a b b a	a b b a	c d e	d c e

There is a variation from the strictly Petrarchan type which is known as the "English" type of Sonnet. It has three quatrains clinched by a concluding couplet.

ENGLISH TYPE

	Quatrain	Quatrain	Quatrain	Couplet
(i) Surrey Shakespeare variety	a b a b	c d e d	e f e f	g g
(ii) Spenserian variety	a b a b	b c b c	e d c d	e e

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

Oliver Goldsmith (1728—1774)

INTRODUCTION

Life of the Poet

Oliver Goldsmith was born at Pallas in Longford, Ireland on November 10, 1728. His father was a clergyman of small income but large heart.

At school Goldsmith was a dull boy; he obtained the last place in the Entrance Examination. In 1744 he entered the Trinity College, Dublin. He was very poor, and his appearance was ugly; but he was a young man full of gaiety. He became popular with his fellows by his skilful flute-playing and singing. He took his degree in 1749, occupying the last place in the final examination.

Goldsmith tried to enter the church but the Bishop rejected him for his inefficiency. Next he tried teaching and amassed a sum of thirty pounds. Next a kind uncle provided him with £50 to enable him to study law; but Goldsmith gambled away the money in a short time. Now destitute of funds, he made up his mind to travel through Europe on foot "with only one clean shirt and no money in his pocket." He first visited Flanders where he obtained a medical degree. He passed to France, Germany, Switzerland and Italy supporting himself by his flute and by holding disputes at various universities. For a time he worked as a chemist's assistant. Next he tried to set up practice as a physician but was unsuccessful. He served his apprenticeship to literary work as a proof-reader for the novelist, Samuel Richardson who was a printer by profession. But he gave up the job. Then he became the reviewer of books for the *Monthly Review*. But he gave up this too. Then he tried in vain for a medical appointment under the East India Company.

Goldsmith now depended entirely on his literary work for his living. He did any amount of hack work for publishers, and became fairly well off. He made friends among the literary circle of his time.

Continuous work broke down Goldsmith's health. He died on 4th April, 1774.

Goldsmith was a voluminous writer. He is said to have earned £5600 from his writings. Among the most notable of his works we may mention.

1. The Citizen of the World (1762)
2. The Traveller (1764)
3. The Vicar of Wakefield (1766)
4. The Good-Natured Man (1768)
5. The Deserted Village (1770)
6. She Stoops to Conquer (1773)

Goldsmith had a loveable personality. He was always a grown-up child. He had a child's sensitiveness and thoughtlessness, a child's capacity for enjoyment and incapacity for taking care of himself. He did not shine in a conversation. His manner was nervous.

Characteristics of Goldsmith's Style

Goldsmith's verse is marked by a grace and sweetness. It is this grace and sweetness that forms a chief attraction of Goldsmith's poetry for all readers.

Goldsmith shows himself the true child of the 18th century. He launches into didacticism and arguments, and occasionally indulges in irony and satire. But his arguments are humanised by the introduction of pathetic and beautiful human situations. Thus, in *The Deserted Village* the picture of the "poor, houseless, shivering female" beautifully concludes the description of town-life. Similarly, his arguments about the evils of commerce are illustrated by descriptions of pathetic human situations, namely, the sorrows of the emigrant's family.

Goldsmith's irony and satire are relieved by a graceful tenderness. The sympathetic portrait of the Village Schoolmaster is an instance in point.

Goldsmith has a remarkable gift of simplicity. Unlike his predecessors he loves the simple homely joys of the poor and the simple beauties of Nature. There is no attempt in his poetry at artificial and rhetorical embellishment. His quiet description of rural scenes and the graceful pictures of the joys of domestic life appeal to all classes of readers for their simplicity.

He has wonderful qualities of naturalness and ease. He writes straight from the heart. His poetry has often been compared to the singing of birds.

In Goldsmith's writings there is much that is sentimental, but his sentiments are pure. He is ever tender and sympathetic. This is seen in his pictures of domestic life.

There is a genial humour in Goldsmith. His humour is never biting and caustic, as we see in his portrait of the Village Schoolmaster.

Goldsmith condemned the monotony and the dressing up of trifles, which he found in the heroic couplet of his time. He himself remarked, "Let us instead of writing finely try to write naturally; not hunt after lofty expressions to deliver mean ideas." He largely succeeded in carrying out the ideal, but in style and versification he followed his age. His poems show the same liking for the personification of abstract terms, for set epithets and for words of Latin origin as the writings of other eighteenth century poets.

Simplicity and naturalness are the chief qualities of Goldsmith's style, but he never forgets that the poet is an artist. He arrived at the final forms of his poems after much revision. The imagery of his poetry is exquisitely polished; the diction is smooth and sweet.

Goldsmith follows the versification of his age. He writes in the heroic couplet like the greater poets of the age.

Classical and Romantic Elements in Goldsmith

The classical poets used an artificial language. It was a style full of personification, circumlocution and other rhetorical devices. Many of those devices appear in Goldsmith.

As examples we may quote from *The Deserted Village*—

'While Resignation gently slopes the way.'

'Where grey-beard mirth and smiling toil retired.'

The classical poets used words of mythological reminiscence to express facts of common life. Such words are "swain," "nymph" etc.

Other rhetorical devices used by classical poets are antithesis and epigram. In Goldsmith we find "A youth of labour with an age of ease." (antithesis)

"His best riches ignorance of wealth." (epigram)

Goldsmith's use of similes reminds us of classical masters. Goldsmith follows Pope in the following simile—"as some tall cliff.....on its head."

Goldsmith also followed the classical practice of writing poetry in the heroic couplet. But he introduced into this form a freshness that was his own.

Goldsmith imitated the classical school in his tendency to moralise and philosophise in verse.

In sentiment and idea Goldsmith is prevailingly romantic.

The classical poets were self-restrained, but the romantic poets were passionate. Hence the romantic poets were fond of invoking anything that moved them. In this Goldsmith resembled the romantic poets (Cf. his invocation of 'sweet poetry').

The classical poets kept their own feelings in the background. They seldom allowed their passions and feelings to intrude in their poetry. But Goldsmith like the romantic poets introduced a personal note in his poetry, e. g., "I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown" etc.

Like the romantic poets Goldsmith introduced a subtle melancholy atmosphere.

Goldsmith's affinity with the romantic poets appears in his power to set off the life of Nature with a simplicity, a delicacy and a strange sensitiveness. Example:—

"Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath its thorn." This reminds us of Wordsworth's

'A violet by the mossy stone,
Half-hidden from the eye.'

In his longer descriptions there is a fondness for manifold details. We may refer, for instance, to the beautiful description of rural life in *The Deserted Village*.

Date of Composition of 'The Deserted Village'

Goldsmith had begun to compose *The Deserted Village* about the middle of May, 1768. This we learn from an account of Goldsmith's manner of writing which has been left to us by a young law-student and friend of the poet. The poem was published on May 26, 1770.

The poem was dedicated to the great painter Sir Joshua Reynolds. Five editions of the poem appeared in course of six months.

✓ Plan and Purpose of the Poem

"Goldsmith intended *The Deserted Village* to be an elegy over the decay of peasantry and an invective against the increase of luxury." For this purpose he draws a beautiful and idealised picture of pastoral innocence and simplicity that existed before the age of commerce; and then he contrasts it with the miseries that came over the people in the wake of commercial prosperity.

The plan that Goldsmith adopts is the usual method of drawing a philosophy from personal observation. In his imagination the poet revisits the village of his childhood now fallen into decay. As he recalls the happy scenes and the pleasant life of the past he is full of sadness at her present destitute condition.

✓ Main Ideas of the Poem

The following are the leading ideas which we gather from *The Deserted Village* :

Accumulation of wealth causes the decay of the peasantry and weakens the moral fibres of a nation.

In an ideal state every man possesses just enough land and keeps himself above want by cultivation.

Trade concentrates wealth in the hands of a few rich men. The rich deprive the poor peasants of their lands for their own luxury.

The peasants deprived of their chief sources of living are forced to emigrate to foreign lands.

This is followed by the ruin of the villages. With the villages pass away the simple joys and innocence of the village people, which are the real basis of a nation's greatness.

The luxury of the few leads to the poverty of many.

The ruin of villages is followed by the growth of towns, and town-life is the source of many vices.

Historical Background

From early times the greater part of the land in England was in the possession of the cultivators. The cultivators tilled as much as was necessary and used the rest of the land as common pasture. But gradually, the landlord began to encroach upon this common land. At the end of the 16th century, an Act was passed which compelled the landlord to attach four acres of land to every cottage on his estate. But the landlords continued to make their efforts to acquire more lands. In 1709 the first Enclosure Act was passed. By the Act the landlord had the right to enclose common land after the payment of due compensation to the tenants. The conditions for the tenants were so hard that the tenants could not meet them; hence the land passed absolutely to the possession of the rich landlord. The ground for this encroachment was alleged to be the need of bringing larger tracts of land under cultivation. The tenants also used the common land partly for the purpose of pasture. But they lost the privilege of grazing their cattle in the enclosed land. The enclosure of land did lead to the improvement of agriculture, but it impoverished the peasantry. The poor labourers lost their faggot for their hearths, the milk for their children, the slice of meat at their own dinners. The result of all this was widespread distress and wholesale emigration. Many villages in England were depleted of their inhabitants.

Goldsmith's Economic Views

Writing to Joshua Reynolds, Goldsmith said, "I know you will object that the depopulation it deplores is nowhere to be seen, and the disorders it laments are only to be found in the poet's own imagination." From this it is clear that Goldsmith himself knew his opinions to be unorthodox, and unpopular.

The older economists held that the accumulation of wealth was a sign of national prosperity and that emigration being the result of surplus population indicated growth rather than decay. But Goldsmith protested against orthodox view. He pointed out that

".....this wealth is but a name

That leaves our useful products still the same,"
that

"A bold peasantry their country's pride

When once destroyed can never be supplied,"

Goldsmith's view is now considered to be a sound one. It is now increasingly felt that the unequal distribution of wealth is responsible for sapping the economic foundations of society.

Analysis of the Poem

The Deserted Village opens with an address to 'Auburn', once the loveliest of villages, where the poet passed his happy years of his youth. The poet recalls with sorrow the familiar features of the village—the sheltered cot, the never-failing brook, the busy mill and all the merry sports and festivities in which the villagers took part. (LI. 1-34)

The poet regrets the change that has come over the place. The scene is very different now. The happy village is now a deserted village. Instead of merry rustics, only lapwings and bitterns haunt the place. The cause for this change is that the whole village has passed into the possession of one wealthy landowner, and its peasants unable to bear his tyranny are migrating to far-off countries. (LI. 35-50)

The poet now makes general reflections over the change that has come upon the country due to the enormous increase of wealth. Wretched indeed is the country where wealth is accumulated in the hands of a few rich men and the population decays. A bold peasantry is the backbone of the country, and whether lords flourish or fade is quite immaterial for the country. The golden age in England was in the past. Long ago, in happier times England was a land of peasants, healthy hard-working and well-contented. Then all the land was tilled and the country was full of prosperity. But the good old days are gone. Now those who have grown rich by commerce have driven out the peasants and destroyed the villages. The simple happy old English village-life is gone. (LI. 51-74)

Auburn too has suffered this fate. The poet is shocked at the difference between what she was and what she is now. As he revisits the village he is pained to see the sad change that has come over the whole scene. During all his wanderings the poet hoped to return to Auburn and there pass his last days in peace. He reflects on the happiness of retired life. How happy it is for one, he says, to retire peacefully in

old age. But the poet is afraid that such retirement shall never fall to the lot of the poet. Happy is the man who after a life of toil lives in peaceful retirement. He has a glimpse of the joys of heavenly life even before death, and he glides imperceptibly from earth to heaven. (LI. 75-112)

The poet now turns to describe the charms that Auburn once possessed. How sweet it was in the evening to hear mingled sounds of the happy village—the song of the lover in response to his sweetheart, the soft lowing of cattle, the cackling of the geese, the noise of children returning home from school, the baying of the watch-dog and the hearty laugh of the care-free villagers. But now there is absolute silence and solitude. The sole survivor of the village is a poor lonely widow—"the sad historian of the pensive plain." (LI. 113-136)

The poet describes the house, the character and the guests of the village preacher.

The village preacher lived in a modest house satisfied with the modest income of forty pounds a year. He could not flatter the rich and the fashionable people; and therefore was not promoted to a higher post with a higher salary. But he was satisfied with his humble post and with the work of saving the souls of his parishoners. He helped all who sought his help without caring to know whether they deserved help or not. He was eager to help the distressed out of their misery. His only fault (if fault it could be called at all) was his excessive eagerness to help the poor, which made him often indiscreet in exercising his charity. He was a true pastor. Both by precept and example he taught others to lead a higher life. His presence inspired a dying man with faith in God and hope of a better life after death. At church he was an inspiring spiritual personality. Even the unbelievers were impressed by his eloquent appeal and listened to him spell-bound. His personal charm was also very great. Both grown-up men and little children eagerly sought his company and found delight and comfort in his smile and conversation. But above all he had a lofty soul rising above the petty cares and troubles of life. (LI. 137-192)

The poet now describes the village schoolmaster. The schoolmaster was a lover of strict discipline, and was a terror to all the truants. But his was a kind heart in spite of his

severity, his pedantry and 'words of learned length.' The village schoolmaster was regarded as a prodigy of learning by the simple villagers. He was skilled in arguing and would never confess to a defeat. But everything is changed now, the very spot of his triumphs is utterly forgotten.

(LI. 193-218).

The poet now describes the village inn. The village inn stood near the thorn tree. It was a centre for news and merriment. The villagers used to meet here after the day's toil. Stale news was hotly discussed here by the village politicians over their old age. The inn was decorated with pictures, and its floor was neatly sanded to absorb the ale that might be split. There was a chest of drawers that served also as a bed at night. When winter was over and a fire was not necessary the grate was filled with branches of aspen and plants of various kinds. But the village inn is now in ruins. It has now sunk into obscurity. All the mirth and merriment of the place is over. (LI. 219-250)

The poet now contrasts the simple innocent enjoyments of the villagers with the artificial life of the rich and fashionable people of the town. The simple joys of village-life, though much despised by the great, are dear to the poet. They are natural and far more valuable than the artificial pleasures of the fashionable world. The latter produce more discomfort and tedium than real joy to those who indulge in them.

(LI. 251-264)

The poet now dwells on his favourite theory of wealth. According to the poet the accumulation of wealth by trade in the hands of a few rich men has led to the poverty of the people. Splendour and happiness do not always go together. A country may be poor, yet happy. This is true specially of England. The wealth of the country has much increased due to England's vast foreign trade. England has become the centre of commerce, and wealthy men from all parts of the world crowd here. But the country has not gained thereby. The useful products of the soil have decreased while wealth has increased. Vast tracts of land are being daily taken away from the poor peasants by the rich for their pleasures. So the poor peasants leave the country in large numbers and emigrate to America. The result is depopulation of the country. Besides the home-products are being exported in

exchange for articles of luxury. The country being thus exclusively devoted to luxury, is sure to be ruined. When a beautiful woman loses her natural charms, she seeks artificial aids, but in vain. The artfulness in her dress is a sign of her fading beauty. Similarly, the outward splendour of a land is a sure sign of its decay. It is ruined by luxury. And when its peasants are driven away by want and famine, it becomes almost a grave. (LI. 265-308).

When the poor peasant goes to the city, he sees the sad contrast between the labourer and the capitalist, between the pomp of the proud and the gibbet of dishonour that is the lot of the poor, between the rich seducer and the homeless seduced girl. It is a gloomy contrast. The poor find no home in the city and are forced to emigrate to other countries. The inhabitants of Auburn too share the same fate. (LI. 309-340)

The poet again turns to Auburn whose people have now migrated to the wilds of America. Here, under burning suns, in dangerous woods, they are beset by wild animals and deadly reptiles. They are in fear of the savage, murderous Red Indians and fierce hurricanes. (LI. 341-362)

The poet now describes the sad parting of families from the familiar old scenes and old friends of Auburn. How sad was their last day at Auburn! Men and women, old and young, strong and weak had to leave the village and go in search of a new country. How difficult it was for them to tear themselves away from the dearly loved old familiar scenes and old friends! (LI. 363-384)

The poet now passes to condemn luxury as it is the cause of national ruin. England's luxury has driven away her peasants from their homes. But she has had no compensating gains. Luxury gives a false appearance of prosperity to a country and then ruins it altogether. (LI. 385-394)

In conclusion the poet sees in his imagination the best and the bravest sons of England—her peasantry—moving slowly down to the ship which will carry them over the Atlantic Ocean. Their departure means the departure of rural virtues, such as contented toil, hospitable care, sweet conjugal relationship, piety, loyalty and faithful love. With them also goes the spirit of poetry. The poet then invokes the

spirit of Poetry to teach man to despise the mad pursuit of wealth, to realize that a rich country is not necessarily a happy country, and that a land may be poor and yet happy. (LI. 395-428)

Critical Appreciation of "The Deserted Village"

The Deserted Village is one of the most popular poems in English literature. It has a universal appeal. Its sentiments touch the feelings of all classes of readers. Its style has a sweetness, grace and simplicity.

The Deserted Village is remarkable for its human element. It describes the simple and homely story of the poor.

Goldsmith's attitude to Nature is a personal one. Many passages in the poem reveal the poet's appreciation of the subtle charms of nature, e. g.

"Along thy glades a solitary guest,
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest;
Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,
And tries their echoes with unvaried cries."

Goldsmith has shown wonderful powers of characterisation in his portraits of the village preacher and the village schoolmaster. These pictures reveal Goldsmith's sympathy for human qualities. The description of the "wretched matron" is touched with deep pathos.

Goldsmith has delightful humour. The picture of the schoolmaster is throughout humorous. There are some lines which cannot fail to evoke a quiet smile:

"The swain mistrustless of his smutted face
While secret laughter tittered round the place."
"The chest contrived a double debt to pay
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day."

The poem reveals the personality of Goldsmith—his tenderness of feelings and his righteous indignation. His indignation now flames against a government that supports the rich, and now it flashes against the rich who grind the poor for selfish ends.

Goldsmith's arguments in *The Deserted Village* are not coldly intellectual but touched with deep passion.

The Deserted Village has autobiographical elements. The most remarkable passage which refers to the poet's own life

is one that expresses "the agony of eighteen years in hoping that at some time he might return to die amid the scenes of childhood." He seems to be bursting forth in personal emotion;

"I still had hopes my latest hours to crown
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down.
To husband out life's taper at the close
And keep the flame from wasting by repose."
His invocation to poetry has a personal reference—
"Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride."

The Deserted Village has a melodious diction. He creates an atmosphere of calm and tranquillity in the poem by making the verse move slowly through lengthened out vowel sounds.

There is a pastoral element in *The Deserted Village*. "In his pictures of peasant-life he has shaken himself altogether free from the shepherds and shepherdesses of the conventional poets. We have no dialogue of imaginary swains, no satyrs and fauns, no naiads and dravads. In *The Deserted Village* there are natural touches." "It is men and women we meet, and not insipid creatures male and female."

Where is Auburn

The generally accepted view is that Auburn is the same as the village Lissoy (in Ireland) where Goldsmith passed the happy days of childhood. Macaulay opposed this view and said, "The village in its happy days is a true English village. The village in its decay is an Irish village. Goldsmith had assuredly never seen in his native land such a rural paradise, such a seat of plenty, content and tranquillity, as his "Auburn." From the different parts of the poem it is, however, obvious Goldsmith is sometimes thinking of Irish conditions and often of English conditions. In his *Dedication* he expressly writes, "I sincerely believe what I have written, that I have taken all possible pains in my country excursions for these four and five years past and that all my views and inquiries have led me to believe those miseries real which I here attempt to display." The truth seems to be the opposite of what Macaulay said, that is, the village in its prosperity

was Lissoy and the village in its adversity was some English village which Goldsmith had seen.

It is almost an unquestioned fact that the picture of Auburn in its prosperity is the same as the picture of the village where he had passed his childhood. It is full of personal memories. The references to "the decent church that tops the neighbouring hill, to "the wretched matron" to "the village schoolmaster" (who was Goldsmith's teacher Paddy Byrne), to the "village preacher" (who is identified with his father Rev. Charles Goldsmith)—prove that Goldsmith was drawing upon his childhood memories of Lissoy.

The village in its decay might well have been a picture of an English village in Goldsmith's time. It is a fact that the Enclosure Acts of England took the common land from the poor and gave it to the rich. The result of this was wide-spread distress and wholesale emigration. Goldsmith saw much distress and depopulation all around him in England. He wanted to trace the cause of this distress. He had not seen an English village in his childhood. Naturally he drew from his memory the picture of Lissoy, and gave to it the poetic name of "Auburn," and idealised the description.

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS

Lines 1—34

Paraphrase.—O beautiful Auburn, you were once the prettiest village in the district. Your peasants were blessed with health and prosperity. You were so favourably situated that the pleasant season of spring visited you earlier than any other spot, and summer lasted longer with its beautiful flowers as if they were unwilling to leave you so soon. You were once the abode of innocent peasants who enjoyed freedom from all cares. You were once the home of my boyhood when I could take part in all kinds of games with pleasure. How often have I walked slowly over your green fields where every spot that I saw rendered dear by the recollection of the innocent hours of happiness which I had spent there in the company of others. How often have I stopped to gaze at every pleasant scene such as the humble cottage (of the peasants) sheltered from the weather by

trees, the well-tilled farm, the stream that never dried up, the mill that never ceased to work, the neat and clean village church situated on the top of the adjacent hill. the hawthorn bush with shady seath beneath it for the use of old people to gossip in and the young sweethearts to whisper their love to each other. How often have I welcomed the approach of a holiday when the villagers suspended their labour and gave themselves up to sport. Then the band of rustics freed from their work, conducted their holiday sports under the shade of the large tree on the green. The young competed in all kinds of merry games, one after another, while the old people watched their sports. On the green they indulged in many frolicsome sports such as clever feats of skill or deeds requiring muscular power for their performance. When they were tired of one kind of amusement, they were filled with fresh merriment by new games, and thus their mirth went on without any stop. Here a pair would dance till one got the simple credit of tiring the other out by continued dancing; there an unsuspecting peasant would unknowingly blacken his face amidst the suppressed laughter of all. Modest girls would be casting stolen glances at their lovers, in spite of their reproving looks. Such were thy attractions, sweet Auburn. Such innocent amusements as these succeeding each other in pleasant, and caused happiness to reign among your cottage—such were thy charms once, but all these charms have disappeared.

Sweet Auburn—Auburn is 'sweet' because the poet passed the happy days of his childhood there and it was the loveliest of villages. For discussions regarding the identity of Auburn see Introduction. *Loveliest*—i. e. once the loveliest. *Of the plain*—of all the villages in the district. *Plenty*—abundance of food and other necessities of life. *Cheered*—made happy. *Labouring swain*—hard-working peasant. 'Swain' is a poetical word for 'peasant.' Originally the word meant 'a servant.' *Smiling*—beautiful and pleasing with pleasing with the promise of summer. *Smiling spring*—spring has been personified here. The poet refers to the cheerful aspect of nature in the season of spring. Some 'commentators' take "smiling" not as referring generally to 'spring' but as referring to 'Auburn' in which case it would mean 'auspicious,' 'favourably inclined.' Spring *smiled upon*

Auburn and visited the village early. *Its earliest visit*—its first appearance. *Parting*—departing. *Blooms*—poetical for 'blossom' or flowers. *Lingering blooms*—the flowers of summer are fancied as being quite unwilling to leave Auburn.

Explanation—*Where smiling spring*.....*dclay'd*—The poet thinks his sweet village as specially favoured by Nature. Winter was driven away from the village quite early in the year at the advent of spring. Auburn had such a favourable situation that spring made its appearance there earlier than in other places. Also, summer lasted longer with all its flowers, than in other parts of the country, the climate of Auburn being genial.

Bowers—dwelling-places; abodes. The word also means 'arbour.' The poet has here combined both the senses. *Bowers of innocence and ease*—cottages, of innocent and contented peasants. 'Innocence' and 'ease' are abstract nouns used in the sense of the concrete. (Figure of speech, synecdoche). *Seats of my youth*—home of my boyhood. Goldsmith passed his boyhood and youth at Lissoy. *When every sport could please*—when life had not lost its charm, and as is natural with all young men I could find pleasure in every kind of sport.

Loiter'd—(i) 'lingered; walked slowly; in order to take in the charm of each scene.' (Sharp)

(ii) 'Looked with lingering, because loving eye, over thy beauties.' (Barrett)

Green—green fields. *Humble happiness*—happy lives of humble or common peasants. *Endear'd*—made dear to me. *Scene*—place. *Paused*—lingered. *Paused on every charm*—gazed lingeringly on the various charming features of the scene. *Shelter'd cot*—comfortable cottage protected from the weather, cold or rough winds. *Cultivated*—highly cultivated. Used emphatically, because all the farms are cultivated. *Never-failing*—never dried up, but always running. *Busy mill*—flour mill constantly at work, probably driven by water-power. *Decent church*—beautiful church of the village. *Topp'd*—stood on the summit of. *Hawthorn*—a kind of thorn tree producing red berries. *Seats beneath the shade*—seats for people to sit on in the shade of the bush. *Talking age*—old

people who are habitually garrulous or talkative, an example of abstract for concrete. *Whispering lovers*—lovers uttering their vows to each other in a soft and low tone as not to be overheard. *Bless'd*—welcomed the approach of, looked forward to with pleasure. *Coming day*—approaching holiday. *Toil*—labour. *Remitting*—ceasing. *Lent its turn to play*—allowed play to have its turn. The meaning is: "On the other days toil or labour has had its share of attention; on the holidays play or amusement had its turn." *It* refers to 'play.' Prior finds an allusion to the numerous holidays usually kept by the Roman Catholics in honour of the saints. *All the village train*—all the villagers, band of rustics or all the villagers in a long line or procession. *From labour free*—free from labour in the fields. *Led up*—began. *Their*—refers to train. *Spreading*—with branches wide-spread. *Many a*—the singular noun is used after 'many a' though the sense is plural. 'Many a' probably is a corruption of many of.' *Pastime*—anything that makes time pass; any amusement or sport. *Circled*—passed on in succession from one to another till all had a share in it. The poet means that the villagers played games in which everyone took his turn in succession. But Sankey explains thus: "The players in many a game (such a 'kiss in the ring') formed circles under the shade."

Explanation.—*How often.....survey'd*—In these lines the poet describes how on holidays the villagers gathered themselves under the spreading branches of a big tree on the village common and indulged in sports. There were many games in which the people stood in a circle and everyone had a share in them in succession. It is the young people who competed with one another in these games. The old people watched these sports with pleasure, for their age did not allow them to take active part in these games.

Gambol—a merry leap; sportive gesture. *Many a gambol.....ground*—many merry pranks were played on the ground. *Sleights*—tricks; skilful performances. *Sleights of art*—skilful tricks; clever feats of skill as opposed to strength. *Feats of strength*—deeds that require muscular power for their performance, such as throwing the bar, having the stone etc. *Went round*—were performed one after another.

Explanation.—*And many a gambol.....went round*—

The villagers in their holiday mood merrily took part in all sorts of amusement. Some would indulge in the performance of clever tricks, e.g., game of quoit. Others performed deeds of muscular strength e.g., bar throwing.

Still—always. As each repeated pleasure tried—when the repetition of each amusement tired them. **Succeeding sports**—a succession of fresh sports. **Mirthful band**—merry villagers, object of 'inspired.' **Inspired**—animated with new vigour. **Simply**—(1) only; (2) in their simplicity. By holding out—by persevering or persisting in the dance. The dancing pairother down—two explanations have been given of these lines: (1) If 'simply' means 'only,' then the meaning is:—"the pair of dancers underwent so much fatigue only for the mere applause of spectators. (2) If 'simply' means 'in their simplicity' the meaning would be: "the rustic dancers were ignorant of the graces of fashionable dancing; in their simplicity they thought that the only ideal of excellence in dancing was to dance as long as they could. So the villager would go on dancing with the idea of tiring out his dancing partner." **Swain**—rustic. **Mistrustless**—unsuspicious. The rustic had no suspicion that his face had been blackened.

Explanation.—The swain.....place—The poet here speaks of one of the gambols or tricks that villagers in their jollity indulged in. Generally the lower side of a plate was rubbed with charcoal or burnt cork. Then the simple rustic was requested to touch each side of the plate with his face, and he was promised a reward if he could perform this. Thus the unsuspecting rustic smeared his face with black. Such unconscious blackening of the face provoked suppressed laughter among the fellow rustics.

Secret laughter—concealed laughter. **Titter'd**—'to titter' is 'to laugh with the tongue striking against the root of the upper teeth.' **Bashful**—shy. **Virgin**—young unmarried girl. **Sidelong looks**—stolen glances, from fear of her mother who was standing near. **Matron**—married woman; here, the young girl's mother. The matron's.....reprove—the glance of the young girl's mother towards her was meant to express that she did not approve of her daughter's indecorous conduct.

Explanation.—These were thy charms....fled—After describing the various amusements of the village people, the

poet expresses a regret that these attractions of the village life are now all gone. There was a time when life in the village was made pleasant by delightful sports and pastimes. But those happy days are gone. The village is now depopulated. The peasants have migrated to America. So, the whole village, once the scene of innocent mirth, presents the appearance of a desert.

Lines 35—50.

Paraphrase—Beautiful village of Auburn, you were once smiling in plenty: once the prettiest village in the whole district. But now your amusements are all gone; and all your former attractions have vanished away. The effect of the oppressive hand of the landlord is seen everywhere among your decaying cottages. Ruin and desolation are now in your green fields. The whole estate has now passed into the hands of one wealthy landlord who exercises supreme authority over all, and only half of the fertile plain is left to be cultivated (for the peasants have been driven out of the rest of the land). The bright light of the sun is no longer reflected in your brook which was once so clear and transparent,—for its channel is now so filled up with sedges and weeds that it is only with great difficulty that it can flow at all through these obstructions. The only occupant of your glades is the bittern which utters its hollow booming note as it sits in the nest. Your paths are all deserted; you are now haunted chiefly by the lapwing, and echo nothing but its monotonous cry, your cottages have all fallen into complete ruin; their very shapes can no longer be traced, and their mouldering walls are all overgrown with long grass. As for your peasant inhabitants, they have fled far away, unable to bear the oppression of the wealthy. They have left England for a distant home. *Smiling*—this refers to the happiness and plenty enjoyed by the villagers. *Lawn*—ordinarily, a well-kept trimmed grassy plot, here, used loosely for plain or country. *Are fled*—have disappeared. *Withdrawn*—have gone away. *Bowers*—cottages. *Tyrant*—oppressive landlords. *Desolation*—absence of human dwellings.

Explanation.—Amidst thy bowers.....plain—The village green was once the scene of merry sports. But now it presents a dreary picture. The villagers, owing to the oppres-

sion of the landlord, migrated to America, and their cottages are now in ruins. The whole village is now in the clutches of one wealthy oppressive proprietor.

The allusion is probably to the oppression of General Napier who purchased an estate near Lissoy and ejected many of the tenants for not paying their rents. By his orders their houses were pulled down to enlarge the park around his mansion.

Saddens—makes sad. **Green**—the village green. **Domain**—estate. **Half a village**—partial cultivation. Only one-half of the land was cultivated by peasants, the other half being enclosed for the park or pleasure-ground of the rich landlord. **Stints**—restricts; confines within narrow limits. **Glassy**—clear as glass. **Day**—daylight. **Choked**—obstructed. **Sedges**—plants that grow on the banks of rivers or in marshes. **Works its weddy way**—flows with great difficulty. (Note the alliteration here with repetition of the letter 'w') **Glades**—open places in woods. **Solitary guest**—the only living creature in the glades. **Hollow-sounding**. **Bittern**—the bittern is a bird of the heron family, now almost extinct. It is said to have derived its name from the resemblance of its cry to the lowing of an ox. **Guards its nest**—poetical for "dwells". **Desert walks**—lonely paths, lonely, because the people have left the village. **Lapwing**—a bird also called *peewit*. **Tires their echoes**—tires the echoes produced by the walks. The lapwing's cry is represented as being monotonous. It is so monotonous that even the very echoes become tired of repeating it. The idea is that the lapwing is the sole dweller of the walks. **Unvaried**—monotonous. **Sunk**—fallen. **Shapeless**—ruin—the ruin is so complete that no form of the house or cottage is left. **And the long grass.....wall**—this has been explained in two ways: (1) The decaying walls are still standing, but they are actually lower than the surrounding grass which being unchecked in its growth, has covered their tops. (2) The walls have all fallen in one mass of ruins, and become so nearly levelled with the ground that grass has grown up higher than they. **Mouldering**—decaying. **Trembling, shrinking**—these words qualify 'children.' **Spoiler's**—robber's; tyrant's. **The spoiler's hand**—the oppression of the landlord. The reference is probably to General Napier who

purchased estate near Lissoy in Ireland, and turned many tenants out of their farms. Far far away—the prose construction is “Thy children going far, far away, leave the land.” ‘Far, far away’ refers to America.

Lines 51—56

Paraphrase.—There is great accumulation of money and land in the hands of a few wealthy persons, but the peasants are ruined. A country in which the accumulation of money leads to the decay of the population cannot surely prosper. Such a country must rapidly fall a victim to misfortunes and calamities. It does not matter much whether noblemen prosper or decay, for they may easily be created again, as they have been created in the past by a mere word from the king who is the fountain of honour. But if once the peasants, who, indeed, are the pride and stay of the land, are allowed to decay, they can never be replaced.

Ill—miserably. Fares—goes on. Ill fares the land—that land goes on badly; the country cannot prosper. Hastening ills—rapidly advancing misfortunes. Prey—victim. Where wealth accumulates—according to Goldsmith’s economic theory, when wealth accumulates in the hands of a few rich men, the population decay. Decay—decrease in number. ‘Decay’ has also been taken to mean ‘moral decay.’ Princes and.....fade—it matters but little whether princes were lords prosper or become extinct. A breath—a word or order from the king. Bold peasantry—sturdy peasants. Their country’s pride—of whom their country is proud. Supplied—replaced.

Explanation.—Ill fares.....be supplied. In these lines Goldsmith condemns the immense growth of wealth in England which leads to the decrease of the peasants in the country. Owing to the increase of wealth vast tracts of land come into the possession of the rich landlords who eject the peasants and make parks and pleasure grounds in the lands, and also make peasants pay rents at a higher rate. This tyranny on the part of the rich land-owners leads to depopulation. Goldsmith says that country cannot prosper where wealth is accumulated in the hands of a few rich persons, and the peasants are impoverished and population decreases. Such a country is sure to fall a victim to misfortunes. For

the sturdy peasants are the main source of strength of the country. If they are ruined, the country is doomed. As for the lords, it does not matter whether they flourish or become totally extinct, for at any time any number of lords can be created by an order of the king in the same way in which they were created in the past. But the sturdy peasants are the product of centuries of national progress; and their place can never be supplied. Hence the country becomes weak through their decay.

Lines 57—62

Paraphrase.—Before the beginning of her woes and miseries due to the decay of her peasants, there was a time in England when every rood of ground was cultivated by a peasant who was able to live comfortably, and with little labour. Then every peasant obtained a supply of wholesome food by easy labour, and he did not produce anything more than what is temperate life required. Then men were innocent and healthy, and had no inordinate passion for wealth.

A time there was—the poet refers to a golden age in the past. Ere England's griefs began—before England's miseries commenced. When every rood.....man—when every small plot of land in the country was cultivated by a peasant and maintained him and his family. Rood—one-fourth of an acre Barrett remarks, "Goldsmith's estimate of a man for every rood of ground would make the population of England far too great." But this must be taken in the general sense of a plot of land. Light labour—easy toil. Her wholesome store—enough of wholesome food. 'Her' refers to 'labour.' Just what gave life required—gave the bare necessities of life; and nothing for luxury. His best companions—his best companions being innocence and health. The idea is that the English peasant was blessed with health and innocence throughout his life.

Explanation.—And his best riches, ignorance of wealth—This is paradox. The English peasant, according to Goldsmith, was truly rich, because he had no riches. He knew no luxuries, so he did not miss them; he had the wholesome necessities of life that he wanted; hence he was truly rich and happy.

Lines 63—74

Paraphrase.—But those happy times have gone. Times have changed. Now men who have become rich through commerce gradually acquire and occupy the land and cruelly drive away the peasants. On the fertile plain where in former days scattered villages of peasants stood, are now to be found large unmanageable estates and burdensome establishments of these rich people with all their pomp and magnificence, and artificial wants which usually attend the possession of wealth as well as those vexations which wealthy men foolishly suffer from in order to gratify their pride. Those calm and peaceful hours of happiness that were the outcome of comfort and abundance in former times, those temperate wishes that never stepped beyond the bounds of reason and thus could be easily satisfied, those healthy sports that once made the village green look gay and exercised fresh charms over the country-side and the salutary effect of which was seen in the faces of the people are all over. These merry manners and customs of the English village have all disappeared, and must be sought in another country more congenial to their growth.

Times—"the circumstances existing at any particular time." (Sharp). Are altered—have changed. Trade's unfeeling train—those who follow trade. Unfeeling—having sympathy for the peasants whom they deprive of their land. Usurp—take possession of forcibly. Merchants, made rich by trade, buy land in the villages and become landlords. The landlords drive out many of the peasants, and occupy their land to make parks, lakes etc. for their selfish luxury. Dispossess the swain—deprive the peasant (of the possession) of the land. Lawn—open space. Scatter'd—seen at intervals. Hamlets—small villages Rose—were seen. Unwieldy—unmanageable from its amount. Cumbrous—burdensome to the owner of wealth. Repose—like a little of ease and luxury. Every want to opulence allied—all the artificial wants born of wealth and luxury. Pang—mental uneasiness or pain. That folly pays to pride—that a foolish person suffers from because of his wounded pride. Every pang..... pride—rich men have an exaggerated idea of the respect due to them from others. This makes them uneasy, and for this

uneasiness their own foolishness is responsible. Besides, their pride is easily wounded. If a rival landlord is more honoured, they suffer from wounded pride. Those gentle hours.....bloom—that peaceful life which was possible when the peasants had plenty of food to eat. Bad to bloom—caused to flourish. The word 'bloom' suggests that 'gentle hours' have been compared to 'flowers.' Calm—sober; moderate. That ask'd but little room—that were limited to a few objects and could be easily satisfied. Healthful sports—sports that promote health. These sports have been described above. Graced—adorned; gave a charm to. Lived in every look—left their mark on the faces of the people; made their faces bright and happy. Far departing—go to distant country. Kinder—more 'avourable to their growth. Shore—country. Rural mirth—country sports. Manners—customs.

Lines 75—82

Paraphrase.—Beautiful Auburn, you were once the source and scene of so much happiness but now the deserted condition of your glades indicates the oppressive nature of the present landowner. I walk once more, all alone along your paths now overgrown with shrubs and bushes. I take my usual walks once more across your neglected enclosures. Once more, after the lapse of many years, I come back to see the site of the old cottage and the hawthorn bush. As I do so, the many associations and reminiscences of the past which memory recalls, fill my breast and make the recollection of the happy past bitterly painful.

Parent of the blissful hour—source of such happy time. Glades—open spaces. Forlorn—deserted; desolate. Confess—prove. The tyrant's bower—power of the oppressive landlord

Explanation.—The glades.....power.—The village walks were desolate. This was a proof of the depopulation caused by the oppression of the rich landlord. The reference is to General Napier who turned out many poor tenants.

Rounds—usual walk. Tangling—tangled; overgrown with and obstructed by shrubs and other wild creepers. Ruin'd grounds—deserted plots of land. Many a year elapsed—

many a year having elapsed, i.e., after the lapse of many years.

Explanation—Remembrance.....train—Memory begins to be active and rouses all the associations of the places and objects that he sees. A particular spot or object recalls to the poet's mind some incidents in the lives of the peasants who lived there. Those incidents recall other incidents and so on.

Swells at my breast—fills my mind with emotions. Turns the past to pain—the contrast between the happy past and sad present makes the remembrance of the past painful to me Cf. "A sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things" (Tennyson).

Lines 83--112

Paraphrase.—During all my wanderings through the world of woes and sufferings and in all my troubles—of which God has given me my share—I always fondly cherished the hope of returning one day to this village where I might peacefully spend the last few days of my life and prolong my few remaining days in peaceful rest. And in my pride—for pride continues to attend us under all circumstances—I also hoped to display the learning I had gathered from books to the simple peasants whom I hoped to gather round my fireside in the evenings that I might relate to them my experiences and the various scenes I had witnessed. And just as a poor hunted hare attempts eagerly and breathlessly to return to the place from which she was driven out at first, so also I always hoped to return to this village after the troubles of life were over, and to die here in peace.

How charming it is in one's old age to retire from life's fret and fever ! But alas ! I shall never now be able to enjoy such retirement among the cottages of Auburn. How fortunate is the man who can pass in repose his old age in such a place as this after spending his manhood in hard work : who retires from a life full of temptations so as to put himself beyond their reach since it is so hard to overcome them ? He has not miners and sailors working for him and risking their lives in dangerous enterprise to provide him with luxuries. He keeps no rude servant at his gate in ostenta-

tious livery (which his ill-gotten wealth has brought) to drive away starving beggars who ask for alms.

But such has been his virtuous life that he gradually moves onward to death; watched over by angels. He dies gently and imperceptibly, his path to the grave being made easy by his cheerful submission to God's will. He sees visions of future bliss which grow brighter to the very last moment of his life; indeed he seems to be already in heaven before death comes and frees him from this earthly life.

My share—my share of grief. Still—(1) always, (2) in spite of all my griefs. My latest hours—the last days of my life. Crown—complete. My latest hours (to crown—pass my last hours quite peacefully as the happiest close of my life. These humble bowers—cottages of the poor rustics of Auburn. To husband out—to use with economy; make the most of. Life's taper—the candle of life. At the close—towards its end, that is, in old age.

Explanation—In all my wanderings.....repose—The poet expresses a yearning to pass his last days at Auburn in peaceful retirement. By settling down for peace after a life of care one can make the most of his life. Just as a candle which is not moved will burn longer than that which is being constantly carried about; so also a man who rests from labour in old age will live much longer than one who works hard.

Flame—spark of life. Still—even in old age. Pride attends us still—we can never shake off our vanity. Swains—peasants. Book learn'd skill—knowledge gathered from books. Fire—fireside; hearth. An evening group—a group of villagers in the evening. Whom—which. Horns—bugles. Pants—runs breathlessly. Flew—fled. Vexations—troubles. I still had hopes—the repetition of the expression denotes ardent longing on the part of the poet.

Explanation.—And as a hare.....at last—In these lines Goldsmith describes his eager longing to return to Auburn in his old age to breathe his last in peace there. He compares himself to the hunted hare. The hunted hare returns before its death to the spot from which it was at first startled by the hunters and hounds. So also the poet tired by his wanderings abroad and a life full of care wanted to return in his

old age to his favourite village and to breathe his last quite peacefully there amidst the scenes so dear to him from his childhood.

Blessed—blissful ; happy. Retirement—withdrawal from the world. Friend to life's decline—the most favourable to life in old age. Retreats from care—bowers of Auburn which would offer me shelter from the worries of life. That never must be mine—that I am not destined to enjoy. Crowns—completes ; finishes. Shades like these—shelterd abodes like those of Auburn. How bless'd.....ease—that man is indeed happy who finishes his laborious youth with peaceful old age, who after a life of toil in youth passes the last few years of his life in peace and rest in such a beautiful village as Auburn which offers shelter from the worries of life. Quits—leaves. Where strong temptations try—which is full of strong temptations. Try—put men to the test people. Combat—resist.

Explanaton.—And, since.....fly.—When temptations assail us, the most prudent course for us is to fly away from them, since it is difficult to struggle with temptations and overcome them.

For him—for such a man who lives a life of retirement after a life of hard toil. Wretches—slaves. Born to work and weep—doomed from their very birth to labour for the rich and to suffer and weep. Explore the mine—miners are employed by the rich to work in the mines in search of gold. They have to take great risks for sudden explosions might kill them. Tempt the dangerous deep—face the dangers of the sea. Surly—rude. Porter—gate-keeper. Stands in guilty state—stands at the gate in the gorgeous livery of his master. for cruelly shutting out the poor people. Guilty—violating the laws of natural compassion. State—pompous drees or dignified appearance. Spur—drive away in contempt. Imploring—begging. Famine—hungry poor. Moves to meet his latter end—lives to meet his death. Angels—heavenly beings who watch over virtuous men on earth. Befriending—coming to the help of. Virtue's friend—one who has led a virtuous life. Sinks to the grave—nears his end. With unperceived decay—gently and gradually. Resignation—submission to God's will. Slopes the way—makes the descent to

the grave easy. Prospects—hopes. Brightening to the last—growing brighter to the last moment of life. His heavenbe passe'd—he has a foretaste of the joys of the life in heaven after death even in this life because he feels perfectly happy owing to his cheerful submission to God's will.

Explanation.—For him no wretches.....gate—The man, who lives in old age in retirement after hard toil in youth and manhood is, indeed, very happy. Living in retirement he does not require labourers who have to risk their lives for his sake. No sailors or miners endanger their lives to satisfy his greed for wealth. And no insolent porter stands in pompous livery at the gate to turn out the poor beggars who come to seek for alms.

Explanation.—But on he moves.....be past—The poet here speaks of those men who spend their youth and manhood in hard labour and live in retirement in old age in a charming village like Auburn, free from the cares of wealthy men. Such men have a peaceful tenor of life. Even angels befriend such men for they are the best friends of virtue. They live the last days of their life in peace. They submit themselves to the will of God completely in the hope that they will enjoy a bright future life in heaven. With visions of future happiness, which became brighter as death comes nearer, they seem to be already in heaven before their earthly life is over.

Lines—113-136

Paraphrase.—How pleasant it was in the evening to hear the confused sounds of the village from yonder hill ! There, as I used to walk slowly in a care-free manner, the mingled sounds of the village below reached my ears, being mellowed by the distance. I could hear the peasant's song in reply to the milkmaid's. I could also hear the slow-moving cows lowing anxiously to see their calves again—the loud cackle of the geese on the pond ; the cries of the children who had just been freed from the confinement of the class rooms, and were eager for play ; the barking of the watch-dog at the rustling wind, and the loud bursts of laughter of the people who were free from cares.

All these sounds mingled harmoniously together, reached my ears as I walked along the shady path. They were heard

by me whenever the nightingale paused in her song. But now the sounds made by the people are no longer heard by me because the village is deserted. No cheerful sounds rise and fall upon the breeze; the footpaths being no longer trodden by busy men are now covered with grass. For now every sign of healthy life is gone. The only sign of life that remains is that poor lonely widow stooping feebly over the spring. She, poor thing, in spite of her old age, has to maintain herself by gathering the water-cresses that cover the brook and by offering them for sale. She collects also a few thorn-branches to serve her as fuel in winter. At night she retires to her poor shed to spend the hours of darkness in tears. She is the only one of the villagers left to tell the sad story of the desolation of the district.

Yonder—over. The word brings the scene before the reader. Village murmur—various sounds of the villages Rose—was heard. Careless—free from cares. Careless stepn—‘careless’ refers to the walker, not to ‘steps,’ hence this is an instance of Tansterr’d Epithet. Mingling—mixed together. Notes—sounds. Soften’d—mellowed by distance. From below—the poet was walking on the hill. Swain—poetic for ‘lover.’ Responsive—singing in response to the sweetheart. Sung—poetic for ‘sang.’ Milkmaid—Goldsmith had sweet memory of a dairy maid’s song. Sober herd—cows moving in a slow and sedate manner. Low’d—a word imitative of the peculiar bellow of the cow. To meet their young—in their desire to meet their calves from whom they had been separated during the day. Noisy—cackling. Gabbled—a word imitative of the cackling of the geese. O’er the pool—as they swam over the pond. Playful—sportive or eager to play after the school hours. Let loose from school—allowed to leave the class-rooms. Bayed—barked at. Whispering—blowing softly. Spoke—indicated. Vacant—free from anxieties because the day’s work was over. The loud.....mind—the loud laughter indicated that the people who laughed thus were free from cares. In sweet confusion—mingling together and forming a pleasant hum. And fill’d each.....made—were heard between the pauses of the nightingale’s song. The sounds being softened by distance into a faint-murmur, would not be heard when the nightingale was singing near the poet. But now—but now that the village

is deserted. Sounds of population—sounds indicative of the presence of people. Cheerful murmurs—joyful sounds of active life. Fluctuate in the gale—rise and fall upon the wind. Busy steps—'busy' is applied to 'steps' though it refers to the walker himself. This is another instance of Transferred Epithet. Grass-grown—covered over with grass. Bloomy flush of life—all the healthy people in the village, enjoying the freshness and vigour of life.

Explanation.—All the blooming flush of life is fled—The people have departed from the village hence all the signs of active life are absent from the village. "As a blooming flush indicates health in an individual so those marks of vigour and prosperity in the life of the village which have been given above are compared to the bloom on the face of a healthy person." (Barrett).

Widow'd solitary thing—the poor lonely widow. According to Dr. Streaan the widow was one Catherine Giraghty. 'Thing'—"The use of the word heightens the picture of the woman's wretchedness—one who seemed to have lost all likeness to a human being"—(Sankey). Feebly—this denotes how weak the widow is. Bends—stoops down to gather the water cresses. Plashy—moist. Spring—stream. In age—in her old age. For bread—in order to earn bread. Strip the brook—strip the brook of the cresses that cover it. Mantling—covering. Cresses—various kinds of watery plants used for food. Wintry faggot—faggot which would serve in a fire to warm her during winter. Faggot—bundle of sticks To pick.....thorn—this heightens the sad picture of the woman's wretchedness. She is forced by her poverty to pick her fuel from the thorn which is not suited for burning. Nightly—used at night Harmless train—innocent inhabitants of the village who have been cruelly turned by the tyrant. Sad historian of the pensive plain—sadly telling the story of the woeful changes that have taken place in the village.

Explanation.—All but you.....pensive plain—All the inhabitants have been turned out by the rich landlord. Only one poor widow lives now in once populous city. Driven to extreme poverty maintains herself by gathering water-cresses. She gathers the sticks of the thorn tree and

stores them up for fuel in winter. She passes the whole night in weeping over her sad lot. She is the only one who could tell the sad story of the depopulation of the village.

Lines 137—192

Paraphrase.—Near that little wood there was a beautiful garden which once looked fine with flowers. A good many of these flowers might be seen even now growing wild.

It was here that the village preacher's poor dwelling-place was situated; its site is now marked by a few thorn shrubs only. He was a man loved and respected by all the people of the neighbourhood. With his contented mind he considered himself exceedingly rich with the modest income of forty pounds a year. Far away from the din and bustles of towns he lived a saintly life. He had no wish to change his humble position in life. He was not accustomed to flatter others, or to seek promotion by changing his political or religious opinions to suit the changing needs of the hour. He was no time-server for his heart had learnt to value far nobler ideals in life than raising himself to a higher worldly position. Thus he devoted himself solely to the noble task of bettering the moral and material condition of the wretched people who needed his help. His house was regularly visited by wandering beggars. He rebuked their aimless wanderings no doubt, but always helped them with alms to relieve their distress. The old beggar whose flowing white beard swept over his breast, was a familiar guest at his house and received his hospitality. The prodigal, who run through his property and had been humbled by poverty, tried to establish kinship with him, and had not his claims refused. The infirm disabled soldier too was cordially welcomed to stay at his house and he sat by the hearth and passed the night in talking over his fighting experiences. Sometimes the soldier wept over the wounds he had received in the wars. Sometimes, again, when his tales of misery had been finished, he would talk of the victories he had helped to gain, and in relating them he would grow so much excited that he would place his church upon his shoulders as if it were a gun, and show how battles were won. Pleased with his guests the good preacher glowed with sympathy, and completely lost

sight of their defects remembering only sufferings. He was not anxious to note either their merits or their faults. He helped them not so much out of charity as out of pity, for his pity had made him help without waiting to reflect whether they deserved help or not.

Thus the village preacher considered himself proud if he could only find an opportunity to help the poor and the suffering, and his weaknesses were only the results of his goodness carried to excess. But he was ever ready to discharge his duty as a clergyman most faithfully. He was at everybody's service, he felt and prayed for all. And just a mother-bird in trying to induce her young ones, newly furnished with feathers, to fly up into the sky, herself sets the example first, so the village preacher tried his best to lead his people to a better life by encouragement and rebuke, but he first set the example of a good life himself. He stood praying by the bedside of a dying man whose mind was agitated by alternate emotions of sorrow (for his past actions), guilt (he had committed) and pain (he was suffering). Under his magic influence despair and pain fled from the heart of the dying man; a feeling of spiritual comfort cheered his last moment and his last faint words were in praise of God.

At church the meek simplicity of his appearance lent an additional beauty and holiness to the place. Teachings from the Bible came out of his lips with double force—that of earnest eloquence and personal example. And even foolish unbelievers who came with the deliberate purpose to ridicule him were so struck by his eloquence that they became converts and remained to pray. At the end of the church-service the simple village people gathered round him. Even children followed him and pulled at his gown just to attract his notice and be favoured with his sweet smiles. The good priest smiled always upon them with the warm love of an affectionate father. He was glad when they were happy, and sorry when they were unhappy. He gave them his love and sympathy, no doubt, but his serious thoughts were all turned to God. Thus resembled some tall and steep rock that rises from the valley, is troubled with storms and clouds in central parts, but enjoys sunshine on its summits for ever.

Yonder—the word indicates the direction towards which the speaker is pointing. Copse—coppice, ‘small wood of underwood and small trees.’ Smiled—looked gay and bright with the beautiful flowers that bloomed there. Many..... grows wild—many garden flowers are still growing though the garden lies uncared for. “Garden flower” cannot be wild flowers in the ordinary sense of the word, that is, flowers which grow spontaneously like the daisy, etc. “The flowers in the text were flowers which sprang up from the seed of those which had been nursed when the garden was in a state of cultivation” (Barrett). Wild—uncultivated. There—superfluous, but used for the sake of emphasis. Shrubs—bushes. Disclose—reveal; indicate. Modest mansion—humble dwelling-place. A man.....dear—he was an object of love and respect to all the people of the neighbouring rural area.

Passing rich—(1) surpassingly rich or exceedingly rich.
(2) Passing for a rich man.

Explanation.—And passing.....a year—(1) The village preacher was contented with his small, modest income of forty pounds a year. His habits were simple and frugal, so forty pounds were enough for him to meet all his wants. He considered himself ‘passing’ or ‘surpassingly’ rich with forty pounds a year.

(2) With the poor income of forty pounds a year the preacher passed for a rich man in the eyes of the humble villagers who were generally poor.

The first explanation is the better. Remote—far away. Godly—pious.

Ran his godly race—led a virtuous life. Race—the use of ‘race’ in the sense of ‘life’ owes its origin to the Bible.

Explanation.—Nor e’er.....place—The preacher was contented with his humble position; he never changed it for a more profitable post nor ever had the desire to change it.

Unskilful—unaccustomed. Fawn—flatter. Seek for power—try to acquire influence over others by securing some higher post. Doctrines—religious or political principles. Fashion’d—shaped; suited. Varying hour—changing circumstances. By doctrines..... hour—by changing his prin-

ciples and beliefs just to suit the needs of the time ; by changing his political and religious principles to please the great men who are in power. This is generally illustrated by a reference to the 'Vicar of Bray' in Berkshire, who was a Papist in the reign of Henry VIII, and a Protestant under Edward VI. He was a Papist again under Mary and once more became a Protestant in the reign of Elizabeth. He is also said to have been a Royalist under Charles I, a republican under the commonwealth and a royalist again after the restoration of Charles II. To retain his position he quickly changed his religious and political principles. He was a time-server. The village preacher was not a man of this type.

Explanation.—Unskilful.....varying hour—The village preacher was a man of principle. He did not flatter the rich and great people for the selfish purpose of getting a high post. He was no time-server. He clung to his religious and political views and would not change them for love of wealth and power. He was, therefore, never promoted to a higher post.

Far other aims—for nobler ideals. Prize—value. Raise—improve the character and condition of men.

Explanation.—Far other.....rise—The preacher was guided by ideals other than those of wordly prosperity. He had no desire to advance in life ; he rather wished to help the poor out of their difficulties and elevate their character. He had nobler aim in life. He was a true clergyman.

Vagrant train—band of wandering beggars.

Explanation.—His house.....pain—The village preacher was famous for his hospitality. All homeless vagabonds sought hospitality at his house, and he readily welcomed them. No doubt he took them to task for living an aimless life. But all the same he gave the practical help. He tried his best to remove their misery and help them out of their difficulties.

Long remember'd beggar—the beggar who was a familiar figure in the locality for his frequent visits. Descending—flowing down. Swept—covered. Aged breast—breast of the old beggar. Ruin'd spendthrift—prodigal who had

wasted all his wealth and made himself wretched. No longer proud—because his wealth was gone. 'Claime'd kindred—tried to establish some relationship with the preacher' Had his claims allow'd—was received with hospitality as a kinsman. Allow'd—admitted. Broken soldier—soldier who had been crippled or disabled in battle. Kindly bade to stay—kindly bidden or requested to stay. Sat by his fire—warmed himself by the fire-side of the preacher's house. Talk'd the night away—wasted the whole night in telling stories of battle. Wept o'er his wounds—shed tears while relating the stories of wars in which he had received wounds. Shoulder'd—placed upon his shoulder. Crutch—stick or staff of the lame man.

Explanation —The long remember'd.....won—The preacher's house was open to all his guests. Among his guests were a beggar, a spendthrift and a soldier. The beggar was an old man whose long-flowing beard covered his breast. He was probably rudely treated elsewhere, hence he paid frequent visits to the preacher's house where he was hospitably received. The spendthrift or prodigal was once rich but had brought poverty on himself by his extravagant living. He was now completely humbled by his poverty. When he was rich he did not care to pay a visit to the preacher. But now that he was reduced to poverty he sought the preacher's hospitality saying that he was connected with him by blood. The good preacher moved by his distress admitted that he was a relative of his and asked him to stay with him. The soldier who had been crippled or disabled in battle and could not serve his country any more also sought the preacher's hospitality. The preacher moved by pity, asked the soldier to stay and dine with him. Thus requested, the soldier would sit by the fire-side to warm himself and would entertain all by telling stories of battle and adventure. He would hold them spell-bound, so that they would not know how the night passed away. He would sometimes weep in recounting how he got his wounds which disabled him for ever. When these sorrowful tales were done, he would tell the thrilling stories of his victories. In doing so he would get so much excited that he would place his crutch over his shoulders as if he were carrying a gun and show how he helped to defeat the enemy and win the victory.

Pleased with—happy in the company of. Learn'd to glow—became animated with joy. Quite forgot.....woe—he was so much moved by their miseries that he completely forgot their failings.

Explanation.—Careless their.....began—The village preacher had a sympathetic heart. When his guests sought his help, he did not just then examine carefully whether they were fit objects of charity or not. He rendered ready help to them. He gave out of pity or spontaneous feeling of sympathy and not out of reasoned charity.

Pity—compassion. Charity—reasoned benevolence; giving after proper deliberation or calculation. "Pity is the feeling roused by the sight of woe and need which seeks to relieve without inquiry; charity is restrained by prudence and asks if the help is deserved" (Murison). Careless—"It would be a poor compliment to the good clergyman to suppose that this word conveyed the notion of headlessness or indifference. It rather means that he did not choose just then in their misery to examine too closely into their characters. Their character was uncertain; their wretchedness was certain, and bad or good, they needed relief" (Barett).

Explanation.—Thus to relieve.....side—The village preacher had too much kindness which led him to help a man who was unworthy of his charity. His charity ran to excess. Such an act might be regarded as a fault or weakness; but we must remember that these faults, if they could be called faults, sprang from virtue carried to excess. In simple English, his only fault was that he was excessively charitable. But—though the preacher was excessively charitable, he was mindful of his duties as a clergyman. In his duty—in the exercise of his functions as a clergyman. Prompt—ready. At every call—whenever any occasion arose. Watched—observed the conduct of people who were left under his care. Wept—wept to see them going astray. Fond endearment—loving trick or device. Tempt—persuade. New-fledged—lately furnished with wings. Offspring—young ones. Reproved—rebuked. Dull delay—delay of those who were not moved by the preacher's words. Brighter worlds—worlds brighter than this world of ours, that is, heaven.

The plural is only poetical as Barrett points out. **Allured**—attracted.

Explanation.—And as a bird.....the way—The village preacher has been aptly compared to a mother-bird. Just as another-bird tries all sorts of loving devices to teach its young one (who have just been furnished with feathers) how to fly to the sky, so the village preacher resorted to all possible means to teach his parishoners how to live a virtuous life. He held out before the glorious prospect of heavenly happiness after death if they lived nobly. He took them to task if they idled away their time, and like a mother-bird teaching its young ones to fly, he asked others to live. Thus he taught others not only by precept but also by his own example. The points of comparison in the simile are mother-bird=preacher: fond endearment of the mother-bird of the preacher; off spring=parishoner; the skies--brighter worlds or Heaven.

Besides the bed.....laid—by a death-bed. Parting life—dying man. Parting' is used for 'departing.' Sorrow—remorse for the sins committed by him. Guilt—feeling of guilt, Pain—pain caused by disease. By turns dismay'd—these feelings troubled the dying man so much that he was unable to pray to God. Reverend—venerable. Champion—warrior for the truth. Stood—prayed standing. At his control—under the magic influence of his personality. Despair—hopelessness. Anguish—mental agony. Fled—left. The struggling soul—the soul of the dying man labouring in pain and anguish. Comfort—solace. Came down—descended from heaven as it were. Trembling wretch—the sinner who was trembling in fear. Raise—inspire with hope and courage. Faltering accents—words uttered faintly and indistinctly because of weakness. Whisper'd—murmured. Praise—praise of God.

Explanation.—Beside the bed.....praise—These lines describe the magic personality of the preacher. The preacher stood by the death-bed of his dying parishoner. The dying man was frightened and unnerved by feelings of sorrow (for his past sins), and by the thought of his own guilt. He was also troubled by the pains caused by his fatal disease. He could not therefore, pray to God. But the

presence of the village preacher by his bedside inspired him. Under the magic influence of the preacher's personality all evil passions fled from the dying man. The mind of the dying man was filled with the hope and consolation of divine mercy. In his last moments he fixed his mind upon God and in his faint voice murmured the words of prayer in praise of God. He died a peaceful death with the inspiring thought that the all-gracious God would forgive him the sins of his life.

Meek—mild; gentle. Unaffected—artless; sincere. Grace—beauty. Adorn'd—lent a grace to. Venerable place—sacred place of worship, the church. Truth—religious truths; teachings of the Bible. Prevailed—became effective; produced a lasting impression on the minds of the people. With double sway—with redoubled force or influence. Fools—foolish unbelievers. To pray—for the purpose of worshiping God.

Explanation—Truth from his lips.....pray—Goldsmith here speaks of the eloquence and earnestness of the village preacher. There were many unbelievers who went to the church with the object of flouting religion. But they were so much impressed by the eloquence and sincerity of the preacher that they were converted and remained there for the purpose of worship. The religious teachings of the Bible are noble and impressive, but they became all the more impressive when they were uttered by the preacher who sincerely followed those teachings.

Service—divine service; worship of God. Steady—firm. Zeal—eagerness. Rustic—villager. With steady.....ran—this shows how the village preacher was loved by the people. Endearing—pleasing. Wile—trick; device. Plucked—pulled at. This was an 'endearing wile.' Share the good man's smile—in order to win the smile of the preacher who greatly loved the children. Ready smile—the smile which was always upon his lips. A parent's warmth expressed—revealed the fatherly love he felt for them all. Parent's warmth—warm love equal to that of a father for his children. Welfare—happiness. Cares—sorrows and anxieties. Distress'd—pained him. To them.....given—his love and sorrow and sympathy were bestowed on them. Serious thoughts—solemn thoughts. Had

rest in heaven—were centred in God. Cliff—lofty hill, Lifts—raises. Awful—majestic; awe-inspiring. Swells from the—vale—rises straight and steep from the broad base of the valley. Vale—valley. Midway—in the middle; half way up its height. Round its breast—round its central part. Rolling clouds—clouds moving with great force. Eternal sunshine—the sunlight that perpetually shines upon the top of the hill.

Explanation.—As some tall cliff.....head—The village preacher was troubled at heart by the cares and troubles of earthly life. He felt sympathy for his parishioners. But his soul soared far above the cares and anxieties of earthly life. He has been compared to a tall cliff of hill. The points of similarity are these :

(1) The cliff rises from the valley tall and straight, so the lofty-minded preacher morally stood above the common men and women.

(2) The central parts of the hill are exposed to the storm and clouds ; so the preacher's heart suffered from time to time from the cares and troubles of earthly life (due to his sympathy with his parishioners).

(3) The summit of the hill is bathed in perpetual sunshine ; so also the preacher's soul soared above all the cares and sorrows of earthly life and enjoyed the serene happiness of heaven.

Tall cliff—lofty-minded preacher superior to ordinary men in loftiness of character.

Valley—world of common men.

Storms and clouds in the breast of the cliff—earthly sorrows troubling the heart of the preacher. Eternal sunshine on the top of the hill—God's grace and heavenly happiness in the mind of the preacher. Barrett explains the lines in a different way :—

“It would seem that the griefs were included in these serious thoughts as the two cannot well be opposed to each other, the meaning being that though he grieved with their grief and sympathised in their feelings, he looked confidently to Heaven ('had rest in Heaven') for the solution and arrangement of all these troubles. The 'rolling clouds' are

the griefs mentioned, and the inexplicable dispensations of Providence, while by the eternal sunshine is typified the final explanation, and rectifying in another world of all that has seemed wrong and mysterious in this. It seems clear that by the clouds and the sunshine, the mystery of the existence of evil in this world, and the *solution* of all doubts in the next world are respectively signified."

Lines 193—216

Paraphrase.—By the side of the straggling fence bordering the way, with all its useless pomp of blossoming furze, lived the village schoolmaster who was an expert disciplinarian. In this house the school was held and it was full of the noise made by the school-children. The schoolmaster was very strict in the matter of discipline and was stern-looking. I myself knew how severe he was and all the boys who kept away from school had a taste of his severity. The trembling boys, who from long experience had acquired a skill in reading signs could predict from the appearance of the teacher, as he entered the school-room in the morning, what punishments they were to suffer that day. He had a large stock of jokes, and when he cut jokes, all his pupils pretended to be delighted and laughed loudly, only to please their master. Whenever he frowned the sad news of his anger rapidly spread from boy to boy in soft whispers. In spite of his outward severity he was a kind-hearted man, and if he was ever severe it was because of his love for learning which made him expect an equal love for it from his pupils.

The simple villagers, one and all, expressed their admiration of his vast learning. He could write and work out sums in arithmetic, measure the area of lands, and calculate the working terms of law-courts as well as the shifting holidays of the year (or the times of the tides). There was a rumour that he could measure the volume of liquids too. His powers of argument were admitted even by the clergyman. And in his argument he would use long learned and high-sounding words to the wonder of the simple ignorant villagers who would stupidly stare at him, astonished to think that so much learning could be contained in one single head—the head of the schoolmaster, for he could go on arguing even when he was defeated.

But all his fame is now a thing of the past. Even the place where he won his victories over his opponents in arguments on many occasions, is now totally forgotten.

Beside—by the side of. Straggling—thinly scattered; growing irregularly. Fence—hedge. Skirts—borders. Way—public way. Blossom'd—flowering. Furze—a prickly bush that grows abundantly in England and Ireland. Unprofitably gay—(1) gay, but unprofitable because the furze serves no useful purpose (2) gay but unprofitable because it does not give pleasure to anybody, the village being deserted. Noisy mansion—schoolroom loud with the noise of children. Skill'd to rule—expert in the matter of maintaining discipline. Severe—strict. Stern to view—dreadful to look at. Truant—a boy who absents himself from school without permission. I knew him well—Goldsmith speaks of his own schoolmaster at Lissoy. Boding—predicting evils from signs. Boding tremblers—boys trembling in fear because they knew the teacher would severely punish them. Trace—see signs of. The day's disasters—the evils of the day; "bad luck, misfortune in the shape of caning or flogging." In his morning face—from the appearance of his face in the morning; from the expression of his face when he first came into the schoolroom. Counterfeited—feigned. Glee—delight.

Explanation—Full well.....had he—The boys feared their strict schoolmaster very much and they tried to please him by laughing loudly at all his jokes, though they did not understand the point of his jokes.

Busy whisper—whisper that passed on briskly from boy to boy. Circling round—passing on from one boy to another. Convey'd—carried from one to the other. Dismal—gloomy. Tidings—news.

Explanation—Full well.....frownd—When the schoolmaster assumed an angry look, the whole body of students trembled. The sad news that he was angry and punishment was near, would be quickly transmitted in whispers from one boy to another.

Explanation—Yet he was.....fault—In spite of his severity the schoolmaster was a kind-hearted man. If he was ever severe to the boys it was because he was fond of learning and wished that his boys should be as learned.

as he. The fault of being severe was not the fault of his nature; it was rather due to his excessive fondness for learning.

The village all—all the villagers. Declared—openly acknowledged. Cipher—work out sums in arithmetic. Measure—survey. Terms—(1) times for paying rent (or quarter-days, Lady-day, Midsummer, Michaelmas, Christmas). (2) Periods of works (as distinguished from vacations) in universities or law-courts; working sessions. The second meaning is not satisfactory. The poor villagers were not likely to take interest in law-courts and universities. Tides—(1) movable feasts or religious Christian festivals throughout the year. There are certain Christian festivals with fixed dates. e. g. Christmas, which takes place on 25th December every year. There are other Christian festivals with movable dates, that is, which do not occur on the same date. e. g. Whitsuntide. The schoolmaster could calculate the dates, of these movable tides of festivals. (2) Periodical rise and fall of the water in seas and rivers. But this meaning is dubious because 'Auburn' is not known to have been situated on the sea-coast. E'en the story ran—it was reported or believed. Gauge—measure the liquid contents of vessels with a measuring rod. The excise gauged liquors in casks in order to levy taxes on them. This appeared to be remarkable fact.

In arguing—in holding discussions. The parson—the clergyman who was the most learned man in the village. Owned his skill—admitted the skill of the schoolmaster in arguments and discussions.

Explanation—And e'en.....argue still—The schoolmaster, though really defeated in debates, would never acknowledge his defeat. He would always go on producing argument after argument till his opponents were silenced by his big, high-sounding words.

Words of learned.....sound—big, high-sounding words which pedants delight in. Amazed—astonished. Gazing rustics—illiterate villagers who stood stupidly staring at the schoolmaster. Still they gazed.....grew—the more they gazed the more they wondered. That one small.....knew—the villagers wondered that one human head which is small 'at best' should contain such a vast amount of learning

It is not implied that the schoolmaster had a particularly small head.

Explanation.—But pass'd.....forget.—The school-master had a great reputation for his scholarship among the rustics. But his fame as a scholar no longer remains, because the inn which was the scene of his victory, is gone, and he had his admirers are all gone.

Many a time—many times. Triumph'd—won victories in argument.

Lines 217-250

Paraphrase —Near yonder thorn tree that now raises its head on high there stood the village inn with its signboard that attracted the notice of the passer-by. The inn is now in ruins. Here once the draughts of ale cheered the thirsty soul. Merry old men and smiling labourers used to gather here after their toil, and village politicians who looked very wise and important, used to discuss state topics over their newly brewed ale. It is delightful to remember the picture of this merry place and the decorations of its parlour. The walls of the inn were neatly whitewashed and its floor well sprinkled with sand. Behind the door was the clock in a neat varnished case, and the chest of drawers was so devised that it could also be used as a bed at night. On the walls of inn were hung pictures which were useful as well as ornamental. The Twelve Rules of King Charles I and the board for the Royal Game of Goose were also hung up there. The fire-place was decorated with herbs, leaves and flowers of various kinds except in winter when the fire was lighted.

The chimney-piece was decorated with a row of cracked tea cups prudently placed there for ornament because they were unfit for use.

But alas ! all these attractions were vain, they could not save the old inn from the ruin that was coming upon it. It has now sunk into obscurity, and will never more cheer up the spirits of the rustics so as to make them feel themselves of some importance in the world under the spell of the liquor. Never again will the labourer go there to forget the worries of his life under the cheering influence of drink. The farmer's news, the barber's gossip and the wood-cutter's ballad will no longer be heard there. Never again will the

blacksmith go there, and wiping his forehead grimed with smoke and sweat, rest his powerful frame and bend forward to listen to their stories. Never again will the landlord, the inn-keeper be seen watching carefully whether his customers were all supplied with foaming ale or not. Nor will the bashful barmaid, who only feigned to be shy because she wanted to be asked again, be seen drinking a little before she passed the cup of wine on to others.

Thorn—thorn tree. Yonder—the word adds vividness to the scene. Signpost—sign-board fastened to a post in front of the inn. Caught the passing eye—attracted the notice of the passer-by. Low lies that house—the house lies in ruins. Nutbrown draughts—drinking of ale as brown as ripe nut. Inspired—cheered the people. Greybeard mirth—merry old men (abstract for concrete). Smiling toil—cheerful labourers. Retired—went after day's labour. Village statesmen—those villagers who take interest in politics. Talk'd with looks profound—talked looking wise and important. (This line is satirical). News much older than their ale—(1) The ale was old, but the news was even older. The villagers wanted old ale which was the best kind of ale and they got it at the village inn.

(2) The ale was new, but the news was old or stale. "The news was stale, but the ale was new, just the reverse of what ought to be the case" (Barrett). Went round—passed from one to another.

Explanation.—Imagination.....place—Goldsmith says that it is a pleasure to him to picture in his imagination the scene of the village inn and its pleasant parlour though it is a scene from humble life.

Parlour splendours—decorations of the inn parlour which seemed splendid to the simple villagers but which were not really splendid at all. Nicely sanded floor—the floor was strewn with sand which absorbed spilt wine. Varnish'd clock—clock whose wooden case was varnished. Click'd—an onomatopoetic word referring to the light quick sound made by the clock. Chest—chest of drawers, table or counter. Contrived—made. A double debt to pay—to do double duty. The double function is explained in the next line. By day it was used as a chest of drawers; at night it served

the purpose of a bed. A chest of drawers—a table with drawers to receive money etc. For ornament and use—the pictures also served a double purpose. (1) They served as 'ornament' decorated the parlour of the inn; (2) also for 'use' (some useful purpose). Use (1) 'It is not easy to say of what use the pictures would be, as distinguished from ornament. The word is probably introduced for the rhyme's sake, unless as is sometimes the case, the top of the picture was made to support clay pipes' (Barrett). (2) 'Perhaps to hide defects in the wall. But it may refer to the game of goose, perhaps also to the practical lessons to be drawn from the Twelve Rules' (Sharp). The twelve good rules—the twelve moral rules of conduct said to be drawn up by King Charles I of England. These twelve rules are :

1. Urge no healths.
2. Profane no divine ordinances.
3. Touch no state matters.
4. Reveal no secrets.
5. Pick no quarrels.
6. Make no comparisons.
7. Maintain no ill opinions.
8. Keep no bad company.
9. Encourage no vices.
10. Make no long meals.
11. Repeat no grievances.
12. Lay no wagers.

Royal game of goose—this is a game played with dice and counters on a board divided into compartments with different titles through which the player progresses according to the numbers he throws with the dice. At every fourth or fifth compartment is depicted a goose, and if the player's cast falls upon one of these, he moves forward double the number of his throw. Royal—why the game is called 'royal' is not clear. The epithet might indicate the excellence of the game and might distinguish it from the ordinary game of 'Fox and the Goose.' The hearth—the fireplace. Except.....the day—except during the chilly season of winter i.e., in summer when no fire was required because there was no child. Aspen—a kind of popular tree. Its leaves are light and tremble at the least breath of air. Fennel—a dark green herb, used for decoration and in medicine and cookery. Gay—looking beau-

tiful. The hearth.....gay—during summer when a fire was not necessary, the fire gate was decorated with flowers, aspen boughs and scented herbs. Wisely kept for show—the tea-cups were broken, hence they were not used but prudently kept to decorate the house. Ranged—arranged in a row. Chimney—(1) fireplace ; (2) mantel piece, i. e., a shelf over the fireplace on which China cups are placed for ornament. Glisten'd—looked bright ; shone. Vain—useless. Transitory—fleeing ; short lived. Splendours—splendid decorations, e. g., pictures, clock etc. Reprieve—delay ; save. Properly the word means delaying the execution of a sentence, hence it is used in the sense of 'save.' Obscure—with nobody to care whether it stands or falls. Tottering—shaking before its fall.

Explanation.—Vain transitory.....man's heart—The poet laments over the ruins of the village inn. The inn had many splendid decorations. All these attractions, great as they were, were powerless to postpone the evil day of the decline of the inn. The inn has now sunk into obscurity, there being nobody to care whether it stands or falls. It will no more be the scene where a poor man could think himself important for a short time under the influence of liquor (or when he gives orders as a master and is served by others.)

Thither—to the inn. Repair—go. To sweet oblivion..... care—to forget the cares and anxieties of his life under the cheering influence of wine. The farmer's news—the farmer knew the news because he daily visited markets Barber's tale—the barber's gossip is proverbial. Woodman—wood-cutter or hunter. Woodman's ballad—possibly some ballad about Robin Hood and his merry men in the forest. Ballad—a popular narrative poem suited for singing. Shall prevail—shall be heard. Smith—blacksmith. Dusky brow—the blacksmith's forehead becomes dusky with the smoke of the forge. Shall clear—shall wipe out the perspiration. Relax—slacken ; rest. Ponderous—heavy. Strength—strong limbs. Lean to hear—stoop forward to listen to the farmer's news etc. Host-keeper of the inn. Careful to see.....round—taking care that all the persons were supplied with wine. Mantling bliss—foaming wine. Mantling—foaming ; covering as with a cloak, with forth. Bliss—ale which gives happiness for some time.

Coy—bashful ; shy. Maid—the girl who served the customers their drink. Half willing to be press'd—she pretended unwillingness at first because she wished to be requested again. Shall kiss.....rest—shall just touch the cup with her lips before passing it on. The villagers in the inn thus pay homage to her beauty. Men in European countries pretend that the wine tastes the sweeter after a girl has put her lips to the cup of wine.

Lines 251—264

Paraphrase.—Yes ! though the humble pleasures of the poor peasants may be ridiculed by the rich and scorned by the proud, yet a simple natural pleasure is more dear to me and more congenial to my heart than the artificial pleasure of the rich and fashionable world. The mind of man derives far greater satisfaction from pleasures that rise naturally out of their own impulses than from artificial pleasures. These spontaneous joys are frequently enjoyed by the mind which is free from cares. They do not produce any jealousy in the minds of others, they are undisturbed and unrestrained. But the pleasures given by the lengthy though grand entertainments such as the fancy dress ball which is often continued far into the night produce more discomfort and uneasiness than genuine pleasure to those who indulge in them. For there the pleasure is born out of exertion and has a sickening effect. And though all sorts of most brilliant and attractive devices are employed in these fashionable entertainments, the men who participate in these grand entertainments are uneasily conscious that in all these there is no real happiness.

Yes !—“as if answering some imaginary object who asks, ‘But are these pleasures really of any value, in spite of the derision of the rich and disdain of the proud?’” (Sankey). Let the rich deride—although the rich may deride and the proud may disdain these simple joys of the poor. Cf. Gray's *Elegy* :—

“Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their simple joys and destiny obscure ;
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.”

Deride—laugh at. Disdain—despise. Simple blessings—humble joys of the peasants. Lowly train—company of poor

peasants. Congenial—naturally adapted to. Native—inborn; natural. Gloss—external polish or show. Of art—artificial.

Explanation.—To me more dear.....of art.—The poet says that the simple joys of the poor are natural and therefore to be valued more than the artificial joys of the rich. A single natural pleasure is worth more than the artificial splendours of the rich people.

Spontaneous—natural. Where nature has its play—in which nature is unrestricted, in which natural feelings have their full scope. The soul adopts—the human soul has a natural inclination for 'spontaneous joys.' And owns their first-born sway—the mind acknowledges the earliest influence of natural pleasures. Lightly—easily. They—spontaneous joys. Frolic—play. Vacant—care-free. Unmolested—undisturbed by the cares of the rich. Unconfined—unrestrained.

Explanation.—Spontaneous.....unconfined —The poet says that natural pleasures enjoyed by the poor are dearer than the artificial pleasures enjoyed by the rich. Such natural pleasures keep us light-hearted, merry and free from cares. They excite no envy or jealousy in others, for all can have them. There is nothing to disturb them, and nothing can keep these natural pleasures in check because the artificial, social laws which check the rich are absent.

Long pomp—(1) a long procession. This is the Latin sense. (2) A grand entertainment continued for a very long time. Midnight masquerade—a fancy-dress ball which people attend with their faces concealed by masks. Freaks—fanciful devices. Wanton—reckless; unrestrained. Array'd—dressed. In these—in such artificial pleasures. Toiling pleasure—the pleasure which the rich man obtains after hard labour. Sickens into pain—becomes so tedious as to be painful. Fashion's brightest arts—most attractive devices employed by the fashionable society. Decoy—allure; entrap. Distrusting—feeling doubts. If this be joy—whether the pleasure obtained from such laborious enjoyment is real.

Explanation.—But the long pomp.....be joy—The simple, natural pleasures of the poor are superior to the artificial enjoyments of the rich. The rich and the fashionable lavishly

spend money and labour in obtaining artificial pleasures e.g., long procession, masquerades. The pleasure derived from elaborate preparations becomes positive pain on account of the labour and weariness involved by these preparations. Even when the attraction of these pleasures are the highest, there is a vague feeling in all hearts that these artificial pleasures afford only excitement but no true enjoyment.

Lines 265—286

Paraphrase.—I ask all lovers of truth and all statesmen, who see how the comforts and pleasures of rich men are increasing while those of the poor are gradually decreasing, to mark the great difference that exists between a magnificent country and a happy one. Splendour and happiness do not always go together. Ships laden with bright ores of gold and other valuable things arrive at our shores and foolish persons welcome their approach with shouts of joy. In England, riches even greater than those a miser wishes for, abound and this country, which is the centre of commerce, attracts rich men from different parts of the world. Yet consider what real advantage we derive from all this. The so-called wealth from foreign trade is only nominal being no addition to our useful products. Immense, however, is our loss. The rich man in his pride occupies land that supported many poor peasants with necessities of life. He must have room for his artificial lake, for his extensive park, for his stables, his coach-houses and for his kennels. Half the value of the crops of the neighbouring fields is spent in buying the lazy fellow his silken robes. Many cottages of the poor have been destroyed to make room for his mansion where he can enjoy himself in solitude. Our necessary home-products, needed by our own people, are now exported all over the world in exchange for the articles of luxury required by the rich. The land is thus entirely devoted to pleasure, and not to useful production, so in unproductive splendour, it awaits the inevitable ruin.

Ye friends to truth—Goldsmith appeals to all lovers of truth. Statesmen—politicians. Survey—see. The rich man's joys increase—through trade and commerce are daily increasing the comforts of the rich. Decay—decrease. 'Tis yours to judge—it is your duty to see. How wide the limits

atand—how great is the difference. Between a splendid and a happy land—between a merely magnificent country and a happy country.

Explanation.—Ye Friends.....happy land—The poet appeals to the lovers of truth, and to statesmen who hold the destiny of nations, to judge how vast is the difference between a wealthy country and a really happy country. Wealth and happiness do not always go together. In a country the upper classes may be very wealthy but the masses may be very poor and miserable. Such a country will be splendid but unhappy. Another country with less wealth for the upper classes may find its masses happy, it will be a happy land though not splendid.

Proud swells the tide—the sea swells with pride at having to bear the rich merchandise. Freight^d ore—ore which forms the freight or cargo of the ship. Ore—properly metal in unrefined form, here gold. Folly—foolish persons (abstract for the concrete). Hails—welcomes with shouts. And shouting Folly.....shore—and fools rejoice at the arrival of so much gold. The people are called foolish because they foolishly think that gold alone can confer happiness on a country. Her shore—folly's shore; land of fools. Hoards—riches. E'en beyond the miser's wish—beyond the dreams of avarice; greater than a miser may wish for.

Explanation.—Proud swells.....around—The wealth of the country has much increased due to England's vast foreign trade. The thoughtless inhabitants of the country think gold to be the source of happiness. They foolishly welcome with shouts the arrival of so much gold from foreign countries. The country becomes the centre of the wealth and commerce of the world. Rich men from all parts of the world would gather there to find investments for their capital.

Explanation.—Yet count our gains.....not so the loss—Goldsmith points out the evil of the enrichment of the country through commerce. We do not gain any real advantage from commerce for the useful products if the soil do not increase. "The so-called wealth does not give us any additional and real blessings, while we lose what is men-

tioned below such as the cottages and with them, of course, their occupants, and our needful products, which are carried to other countries in exchange for the luxuries we derive thence" (Barrett).

The trade does not increase the supply of corn and other useful products of agriculture, as also useful manufactures. So England's wealth from her increasing trade is wealth in name only—it is not wealth in the true sense, for it does not benefit the people.

On the other hand, the increase of wealth produces a real loss because many peasants are driven away from the land by the rich land-owners who want land for their big houses, parks and lakes. These evicted Peasants leave the country and emigrate to America. This is a national loss. For the loss of a bold peasantry can never be supplied.

Takes up a space—occupies land for his residence, park, etc. That many poor supplied—which supported many poor peasants. Extended—vast. Bounds—boundaries. Equipage—carriage. Robe—costly dress. Wraps—covers. In silken sloth—in the luxury of silk garments. Silken is a Transferred Epithet. It properly qualifies 'robe', not 'sloth.' Sloth—idleness. Robb'd—deprived.

Explanation.—Has robb'd.....growth.—This line would most naturally mean that half the neighbouring fields were occupied in producing the material ('silk'); but this is impossible, if the material was silk. Hence it must mean that the rent of these fields was spent on this one robe" (Sankey). "The value of half the neighbouring crops has been paid for the silk garment." (Barrett).

His seat—the palatial residence of the rich landlord. Solitary sports—sports in which none but the members of the proprietor's family and his friends are allowed to take part. Indignant.....green—the land-owner has contemptuously destroyed all the cottages from the land or the neighbouring area.

Explanation.—Around the world.....supplies—We have to export to different parts of the world our useful products, e.g., grain, in order to import the articles of luxury to be used by the rich and fashionable classes.

Explanation.—While thus the land.....fall.—The home products are exported in exchange for articles of luxury. The country being thus exclusively devoted to luxury is sure to be ruined.

Adorn'd for pleasure—adorned not for the sake of 'useful products'. Barren—unproductive. Waits the fall—awaits the ruin which is sure to come on it.

Lines 287—302

Paraphrase.—A good-looking woman, certain of pleasing the opposite sex as long as her power over men is supported by the youthfulness, dresses simply and neglects all the artificial aids to beauty given by fine garments. She does not own to artificial means any part of that triumph which her beautiful eyes can win by themselves. But when her youthful beauty disappears with advancing years, when she grows old and fails to attract lovers, she dresses in a showy manner being eager to charm and gratify, but all her splendours are powerless to win admiration. Similar is the case of a country which falls a victim to the treachery of luxury. At first its people live a simple and natural life, but when it begins to decay it increases in splendour and magnificence. Its beautiful avenues (parks) attract attention, its splendid houses excite wonder, but its very splendour is a sign of its decline.

Driven by famine (because the produce of the land all goes to the rich, the peasants sadly migrate with their families to some other country. While they sink into poverty and exile without anybody to help them, the land becomes more beautiful—a pleasure garden for the rich, though a grave for the poor.

Female—woman. Unador'd—without embellishments. Secure to please—certain of pleasing the opposite sex by her natural charms. While youth confirms her reign—so long as youth lasts and establishes her claims to admiration. Slight-neglects. Borrow'd charm—artificial aids to her charm. Dress—fine dress. Nor shares.....her eyes—allows no artificial means to share the triumph which the beauty of her eyes is sufficient of itself to win." Those charms—those natural attractions. Charms are frail—physical beauty does not last long. When time advances—as she grows old. When

lovers fail—when lovers cease to come. Shines forth—dresses in a showy manner. Solicitous to bless—anxious in her effort to charm others. In all.....impotence of dress—with all the showy but ineffective aid of dress. Glaring impotence—the more brilliant is the dress the more glaring is the impossibility that she will be able to charm anybody. Thus—like the woman trying in vain to attract men by her gaudy dress. Betray'd—brought to ruin (by luxury). In nature's.....array'd—at first its inhabitants live a life of natural simplicity Array'd—dressed. Verging to decline—on the eve of its downfall ; when the time of its decline comes. Its splendours rise—its habits of luxury are at the highest. The magnificent houses, expensive amusements etc. would be included among the 'splendours.' *Vistas*—views seen through the avenue of trees. *Strike*—attract admiration. *Surprise*—excite wonder. *Scourged by famine*—tormented by hunger. *Leads his humble band*—migrates to some other country with his family. *Sinks*—sinks into poverty and exile. *Blooms*—smiles; presents a flourishing appearance. *A garden*—the country is a 'garden' from the standpoint of the rich man, for the land is cultivated in an ornamental manner and used for mansion and parks. *A grave*—the country is a grave to the poor; the ruined cottage of these poor peasants are as silent as the grave. *A garden and a grave*—at once the garden of the rich and the grave of the poor.

Explanation—Thus fares.....a grave—Goldsmith here speaks of the evils of luxury. The artificial grandeur of a woman's dress is a sign of her decaying beauty. So, the luxurious splendour of a country is a sure sign of decay. Luxury and splendour often become the cause of a country's downfall. In a truly happy and prosperous country the people lead a life of natural simplicity. But when a nation begins to decay, the rich people delight in luxury the country is full of magnificent palaces and splendid avenues that attract all eyes—while the poor peasants who are the backbone of the country, suffer from famine and leave the country with their families, without anybody to help them out of the difficulty. Such a country is at once the garden of the rich and the grave of the poor. Thus outward grandeur through trade and commerce is not the sign of a nation's strength and prosperity; but it is rather a sure sign of its

decay and downfall.

Lines 303—308

Paraphrase—Where can the poor peasants go in order to get away from the tyranny of their rich and powerful neighbours? If they take their flocks of sheep to graze on the unenclosed village common which offers only scanty pasture, the rich owners of land are sure, after a while, to divide it among themselves and have it enclosed. Thus the poor are deprived of even the little privilege of grazing their sheep and cattle on the village common.

Then—under these circumstances. *Poverty*—poor men. *To scape*.....*pride*—to get away from the tyranny of the neighbouring landlords who were proud and evicted the poor peasants. *Contiguous*—neighbouring. *Common*—unappropriated land, sometimes the common property of all the villagers. *Fenceless*—unenclosed. *Flock*—flock of sheep. *Scanty blade*—thinly growing grass. *Sons of wealth*—rich men. *Divide*—the land that remained unenclosed for many years is divided and the portions appropriated to each landholder are fenced off. *Bare-worn*—cropped close by the grazing sheep; eaten bare by the constant grazing of the cottager's animals. *Is denied*—even this little privilege of grazing their animals on the common is being refused to the poor.

Lines 309—336

Paraphrase.—If, on the other hand, the poor man hastens to the city, what does he find there? He sees wealth and abundance in which he has no share. He sees numerous trades going on with the sole object of increasing the comfort and luxury of the rich at the expense of the health and happiness of the workers. He sees most of the pleasures of the wealthy are obtained through the toil and misery of the poorer classes. On the one side may be seen the courtier arrayed in richly embroidered silk, on the other hand, the pale artisan—the weaver—works diligently at his unhealthy occupation to produce the silk. Here also may be seen the magnificent processions of the rich, and the black gallows with a gloomy look at the road-side. Here there are richly decorated mansions where the fashionable finely

dressed pleasure-seekers assemble for a ball or party and carry their pleasures far into the night. The brilliantly lighted squares are full of thronging crowds, clattering carriages, any blazing torches. At the sight of all this splendour the careless spectator may hastily jump to the conclusion that here at any rate happiness must reign—and that these scenes indicate a joy that is common to all. The truth, however, is far otherwise. Look at that poor homeless girl shivering in the street. Formerly perhaps she lived in peace and plenty in some village where she wept over stories of the distress of other innocent girls betrayed, never dreaming that, that might be her own fate. Her modesty may have once adorned her cottage home as sweetly as the primrose adorns the thornbush. Now she has lost everything. Bereft of friends and her virtue, she lies on the door-step of the very man who has seduced her. She shivers with cold and shrinks from showers and weeps over the unfortunate day when, eager for town-life, she foolishly left her spinning wheel and her plain country dress.

Sped—gone. *If to the city sped*—if the poor peasant flies to the city to find shelter. *What waits him there*—he finds no relief there but only a sharp contrast between the rich and the poor. *To see...share*—the sight of wealth and abundance in which he has no share, because it is enjoyed by the rich alone. *Ten thousand*—innumerable. *Beneful arts*—life-destroying trades. *Pamper*—feed; minister to. *Thin mankind*—diminish the number of the poor labouring classes. *Sons of pleasure*—wealthy seekers of pleasure. *Extorted*—dragged out by force; wrung by oppressive means. *His fellow-creature's woe*—'his' should be 'their' for the reference is to 'sons of pleasure.' Or Goldsmith might refer to the fellow creatures of the poor peasant, that is, other poor fellows. In that case 'his' would be correct. The contrast between the poor man's poverty and the rich man's luxury is what makes these sights so annoying to the poor peasant when he goes to the city to seek relief. The artisans work hard in the city industries of the profits of the wealthy capitalists and for the pleasure of the rich people who will buy the articles of luxury so laboriously made by the poor artisans. Hence

the joys of the rich man are wrung out of the misery of the poor. *Here*—on the one side. *There*—on the other side. *Courtier*—a rich man who attends the court of a king. *Glitters*—shines. *Brocade*—embroidered silk. *Pale*—because he is underfed and overworked under unhealthy conditions. *Artist*—artisan; mechanic or craftsman. *Plies*—works diligently. *Sickly trade*—which is injurious to health. *Long-drawn*—continued for a long time. *Pomps*—procession. *Display*—make a show of. *Gibbet*—gallows. *Glooms*—looks terrible. *There the black.....the way*—Goldsmith protests against the cruel and oppressive penal laws of 18th century even minor crimes like horse-stealing, shop-lifting etc., were punishable with death. The gibbet was a frequent object on the roadside, all executions being in public. The sight of a dead body hanging down from the gallows was then very common. *Dome*—magnificent houses of the rich. *Where pleasure.....reign*—where the rich pleasure-seekers continue their revelry till late into the night. *Here*—in one part of the city. *Richly deck'd*—splendidly decorated. 'This' qualifies 'dome.' *Gorgeous train*—gorgeously dressed band of revellers. *Tumultuous grandeur*—noisy crowd of grand or rich and fashionable people. *Blazing*—brilliantly lighted. *Rattling*—noisy. *Chariots*—grand coaches of the wealthy. *Clash*—(1) collide because of rash driving; (2) make a clattering noise. *Glare*—blaze. *Torches glare*—these torches are carried by the servants of the rich.

Explanation.—*Sure scenes.....joy!*—At the sight of the pleasures of the rich, one may think that the country is happy, that there is no sorrow in the land. The careless spectator who sees all the magnificent scenes—the splendid processions and the richly gilded carriages of the rich—may think that all the people of the land are happy. But such a conclusion would be utterly wrong.

And these thy serious thoughts—do you seriously think so? *Thy*—refers to the imaginary spectator. *Turn thine eyes*—look at the picture of distresses. *Shivering*—trembling in cold. *In village plenty bless'd*—happy in her village life and having plenty of simple food and clothing. *Has wept.....distress'd*—she had wept over the tales of distress which other innocent girls, seduced by wicked men, have suffered. She never

dreamt that she might once share the same fate.

Explanation.—*Here modest looks.....now lost to all*—The poet speaks of a beautiful modest girl of the village betrayed by the wicked men of the town. The girl lived a happy retired life in her village home, and was the very jewel of her abode. Hence she has been aptly compared to the primrose shyly and modestly looking out through the narrow openings of the thorn-bushes. [The modest girl = the primrose shyly looking out. Humble cottage = thorn-bushes.] This is one of the finest lines worthy of Wordsworth.

Lost to all—devoid of everything. *Her friends*—and even her virtue or chastity were gone. *Betrayer*—her false lover. *Lays her head*—lies down. *Pinch'd with cold*—distressed with cold, *Shower*—rain. *With heavy heart*—with a heart laden with sorrow. *Deplores*—weeps bitterly over. *Luckless hour*—the unfortunate days she left her village home. *Idly*—in a thoughtless manner. *Ambitious of the town*—aspiring to taste the pleasures of town-life, *Wheel*—spinning-wheel. In the 18th century the spinning-wheel was a common thing in English households. *Robes of country brown*—plain dress used by the village-people. *Country brown*—brown colour in which the home-spun clothes of the villagers were dyed.

Lines 337-384

Paraphrase—Sweet Auburn, do your lovely women also share the misery of this poor woman? Do they also suffer from cold and hunger and beg for their food at the rich man's door? Ah, no! they have gone to the other side of the world—to America. With weary steps and through scorching tropical heat they must travel to a dismal land where they are separated from their native land by half the world's circumference. There the wild river Altama answers their murmurs of distress. The terrible sights of that fearful country are far different from the lovely scenes of old England.

There the scorching sun is almost over head and shoots forth his unbearable perpendicular rays. The tangled forests are almost impossible, and instead of sweet-singing birds there are clusters of sleepy bats clinging to the branches of

the trees. In that country the flat plains, covered with luxuriant vegetation, are highly malarious, and the scorpion gathers its deadly poison from the poisonous plants growing there. There the stranger is afraid of every step he takes, lest he should disturb the deadly rattle-snake. There the fierce tigers, and the Red Indians, who are even more cruel and treacherous than tigers, lie in wait for their unfortunate victims. And very often violent hurricanes occur and devastate the land, causing confusion everywhere. All these dreadful things are very different from the charming scenes that the emigrants enjoyed in old England, namely, the refreshing stream, the green fields covered with soft grass, the shady nooks which resounded with the sweet songs of birds and which sheltered no other thefts than those of harmless love, that is, stolen kisses.

O, what a distressing day it was when they left their native village in England and all that was dear to them! The poor rustics, thus exiled from their country, being shut out from all the joys of their life, lingered round their sweet homes, took their last looks, and bade a final farewell to them. In vain did they hope that they might find homes like these beyond the Atlantic Ocean (i. e. America). Still shuddering at the thought of crossing the dreadful distant sea, they found it difficult to tear themselves away from their old homes, and came back again and again to weep over the objects they were going to leave for ever. The first ready to set out for the recently discovered regions (i. e. America) was the good old father, who however, wept for the misery of others, for he himself being brave through the consciousness of virtue, desired nothing for himself but Heaven. His beautiful daughter rendered more beautiful by her tears, who was the loving companion of his old age, went next without a murmur. Quite regardless of her beauty which would have gained her a good husband in England, she preferred to accompany her aged father leaving her sweetheart behind.

The poor mother, however, gave loud utterance to her grief at having to leave the cottage, tearfully kissed her children, who were too young to understand what was going on, and hugged them close to her breast because they were made

still dearer by sorrow while her affectionate husband tried to soothe and comfort her, bearing his own sorrow in silence as a man should.

Loveliest train—the fairest women of Auburn. *Fair tribes*—fair women of Auburn, or gentle inhabitants of the place. *Participate heripain*—share in the miserable lot of the girl described above. *Even now*—when the poet is writing. *By cold and hunger led*—urged by cold and hunger.

Ah, no—they share a worse fate than the girl. *Distant clime*—distant regions, i.e., America. *Dreary scene*—cheerless, desolate scene. *Half the convex world*—half the world's circumference. *Convex*—anything rising to a round form on the outside. *Intrudes between*—intervenes between them and their home. *Torrid*—burning; hot. *Tracts*—regions. *Torrid tracts*—this refers to the central and southern portions of Georgia (in America) which are extremely hot. *Fainting*—tired and therefore weak. *Wild Altama*...Altama is a river in Georgia, U.S.A. 'Wild' refers to the desolate countay on both sides of the river. *Murmurs to their woe*—murmurs in sympathy with their sorrow. The idea of Nature showing sympathy with man has been called Pathetic Fallacy. *Far different*—supply 'are'. *All that charm'd before*—all the pleasant scenes of Auburn. *Terrors*—terrible sights. *Horrid shore*—tract of land near the Altama. *Blazing*—scorching. *Suns*—the plural means the sun as it appears day after day. *Dart*—shoot forth. *Downward ray*—vertical rays. Georgia being near the tropics, the sun remains overhead for a considerable period of the day. *Fiercely*—most scorchingly. *Intolerable day*—unbearable heat. *Matted woods*—woods where leaves luxuriantly grow together in a tangled mass. *Where birds forget to sing*—the birds overcome by midday heat cannot sing. Few tropical birds are songsters. *But silent bats*—instead of song-birds there are numerous bats. *Drowsy*—sleepy, because the bats sleep by day. *In drowsy clusters*—the bats in large numbers resort to a large tree and suspend themselves with their claws to the naked branches. *Poisonous fields*—the coasts of Georgia are swampy and extremely malarious. *Rank*—choked with or apt to produce weeds. *Luxuriance*—abundant vegetation. *Crown'd*—covered. *With-rank*.....*crown'd*—the low plains are covered with vegetation

of too luxuriant growths. *Dark scorpion*—scorpion with deadly poison. *Gathers death around*—collects its poison from the noxious plants growing there. *The stranger*—the emigrant. *Fears to wake*—is afraid of disturbing. *Rattling terrors of the vengeful snake*—the terrible rattle-snakes, the most venomous of American snakes. The rattle-snake has a number of horny plates at the end of its tail which rattle together as it moves. *Vengeful*—revengeful; deadly. *Crouching*—stooping close to the ground before making a spring to attack. *Tigers*—there are no tigers in America, hence the mention of 'tigers' is a poetical licence. The jaguar (which is sometimes called American tiger) may have been meant by Goldsmith. *Wait*—await. *Hapless*—unfortunate. *Savage-men*—American Red Indians. *Murder more murderous still than they*—the Red Indians are notorious for their cruelty and treachery. *Whirls*—rapid circular movements. *Mad*—furious. *Tornado*—a sudden and violent thunder-storm. *Ravaged*—devastated. *Mingling.....skies*—whirling trees, roofs of houses etc, into the air, and thus mingling the earth and the sky. *Every former scene*—everything they had seen in England. *Cooling*—refreshingly cool. *Grassy vested*—covered with grass. *Green*—common playing-field of the village. *Breezy*—where soft breezes blow. *Covert*—shelter; shady nook. *Warbling grove*—grove full of singing birds. *Shelter'd.....harmless love*—gave shelter to the stolen kisses or secret meetings by young innocent lovers.

Good Heaven!—an exclamation expressive of sorrow. *Gloom'd*—made gloomy. *Parting day*—day of farewell. *Call'd them from*—made them leave. *Native walks*—places in their native village where they were accustomed to walk. *Exiles*—emigrants. *Every pleasure pass'd*—every pleasure being over. *Absolute construction*. *Hung round the bowers*—lingered affectionately round their homes for they were quite unwilling to depart. *Seats*—homes; dwellings. *Like these*—as they had in Auburn. *Beyond the western main*—beyond the Atlantic ocean, that is, in America. *Shuddering*—trembling in fear. *Still*—always. *To face.....deep*—to cross the vast and distant Atlantic Ocean. *Return'd.....weep*—this shows the unwillingness of the emigrants to leave their homes. *Sire*—father. *New found worlds*—America which

was recently discovered. America was discovered by Columbus in 1492, but the English began to settle there after the time of Elizabeth. *Wept for others' woe*—the old man did not weep for his own distress but in sympathy with the sorrow of the rest.

Explanation.—*But for himself.....grave*—The old man did not weep on his own account, for being a virtuous man and having full confidence in God, he was not afraid of death. The only world he wished for was Heaven. He was personally indifferent as to where he was to go, as his thoughts and wishes were fixed upon Heaven and the life to come.

Lovelier in her tears—who looked more beautiful because of her tears. Cf. Scott:

"The rose is sweetest, washed in morning dew.
And love is loveliest when embalmed in tears "

Fond companion.....years—she was a very loving and dutiful daughter. *Helpless years*—old age when a person becomes helpless. *Neglectful of her charms*—careless as to whether she was beautiful or not, *And left.....father's arms*—the daughter had won a lover in England who would have been a good husband to her if she had remained there. But she did not pay heed to this. She left her lover to accompany her old father to America. Her sense of duty as daughter led her to stay by her father in his distress. *With louder plaints*—with loud lamentations. *Spoke her woes*—uttered her grief at parting from sweet home. *Bless'd the cot*—spoke in tender, affectionate words of the cottage which was the scene of all their past happiness. *Rose*—had sprung. *Thoughtless*—too young to know anything about what was going on. *Clasp'd*—embraced. *In sorrow doubly dear*—losing all the other pleasures the mother embraces her children all the more affectionately, for they are the only objects of delight to her now. *Fond*—affectionate. *Strove*—tried hard. *Lend relief*—soother. *In all the silent manliness of grief*—silent in grief as became a man.

Explanation.—*With louder plants.....of grief*—Goldsmith describes the grief of the mother. She began to lament loudly as she was going to leave her dear cottage. She

turned to her little children who were too young to realise what was going on. Her children were all the dearer to her for she had lost other possession and had no other object of delight. Sorrow had made her children doubly dear to her. Her husband also left deeply grieved. But as he was a man he suppressed the outward expressions of his sorrow and tried to soothe her in her distress.

Line 385-395

Paraphrase.—O Luxury, thou art cursed and condemned by Heaven. How unprofitable it is to give up things like these rural virtues in exchange for thee. A taste for thee may be pleasant at first: but the pleasure derived from thee is treacherous, because in the long run it leads to ruin. Under thy influence kingdoms rise to unhealthy greatness. The more luxurious a kingdom becomes, the more bloated and unmanageable it becomes—its strength is undermined, every part of it unsound; and it totally collapses, involving others in its own ruin.

Thou curs'd by Heaven's decree—you are ordained by God to be a curse. The reference is to the condemnation of riches in the Bible:—

“How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God?”

Explanation.—*How ill exchanged.....thee*—It is unfortunate that innocence and happiness of village-life should disappear to make way for the luxury of the rich. The humble cottage, filial and conjugal love, and all other blessings of village-life are unprofitably bartered for luxury.

Potions—draughts. Luxury is compared to an intoxicating drink in its effect. Both are pleasant in their effect but are poisonous and destructive in the end. *Incidious*—treacherous. *Diffuse*—spread.

Explanation.—*How do they.....destroy*—Goldsmith compares luxury to a stimulating but poisonous drink. The taste of luxury is pleasant at first. but in the long run it leads to ruin. The very pleasure derived from luxury, is treacherous because eventually it ruins a nation.

Sickly greatness—their very growth is unhealthy. *Florid vigour*—a ruddy, flushed face is not a sure sign of sound

constitution, so the florid and unnatural growth of kingdoms is no sure sign of their prosperity. *Not their own*—which is not natural but only artificially produced by luxury. *At every draught*—at every dose of luxury which has been compared to an intoxicating but poisonous drink. *More large grow*—the more a nation goes in for luxury, the greater will be its seeming greatness and the faster will be its ruin. *Bloated*—unhealthily swollen as the result of over-eating and drinking. The metaphor is of a person becoming bloated from a diseased condition of the blood brought on by drink. *Unwieldy woe*—the country being abnormally bloated becomes unmanageable and thus full of woe. *Till sapp'd unsound*—till their strength being sapped, and every part being unsound. Absolute Construction. *Sapp'd their strength*—their strength being undermined by luxury. *They*—kingdoms. *A ruin round*—a general ruin. *Kingdoms by thee.....ruin round*—Goldsmith speaks of the evils of luxury. Luxury is the cause of the ruin of a nation. Under its evil influence a kingdom has unhealthy growth. But its strength is more apparent than real. The more luxurious a country is the more bloated and unmanageable and miserable it becomes. Luxury undermines its strength and renders all the parts unsound. The kingdom with its unhealthy growth collapses itself and involves other in its own ruin.

Lines 396—430

Paraphrase.—The work of ruin has just commenced in England, nay, already half the work of destruction has been completed. Even now as I stand here thinking of all these it seems to me that various types of rustic virtue are disappearing from the country along with the rustics before my very eyes. The shore is darkened by the sorrowful company of rustics, as they advance to where that ship lies at anchor with all her sails fluttering idly in the breeze. With the rustics are departing contentment that teaches to bear cheerfully a life of labour, hospitality, affectionate relations between husband and wife, religious faith which fixes its desires on Heaven, unchanging loyalty and unshaken love.

And thou sweet Poetry, thou most beautiful maid, thou art also the first to leave a land which becomes the home of

sensual pleasures. The corruptions of this shameful age do not permit thee to touch the hearts of men or gain their honourable applause.

Thou sweet Muse, now thou art neglected and despised, and I am ashamed to call myself thy votary before other men, though in private I am proud of thee. To thee I owe all my happiness as well as my misery. I made thy acquaintance when I was poor, and thy pursuit has kept me poor still. Thou art the guide of the higher arts to excellence, thou art the source of all the virtues. But now I bid farewell to thee. Farewell, and wherever thy voice is heard, whether in north where perpetual cold regions, or amidst the terrible heat of the tropical regions, may thy influence make even the severities of heat and cold bearable.

May thy voice be used to help the cause of truth that is now despised. May it teach misguided man to reject the mad sordid desire for gain. Let it teach them that a nation which possesses natural strength may be very happy though it may be very poor. May it teach them that a great empire raised by foreign trade collapses as quickly as an artificial pier built with so much toil is washed away by the waves of the sea, while a country which possesses strength within itself and does not depend on trade with foreign countries, can resist the ravages of time just as natural rocks resist successfully the weather and the waves of the sea.

Devastation—decay; ruin. *Methink*—it seems to me. *Pondering*—considering carefully. *Rural virtues*—virtues like contentment, hospitality, sweet conjugal relations, religious faith, unflinching loyalty, true love, which are practised in the village. *Down*—downward. The sea being lower than the land, the emigrating peasants are described as moving down to the sea-coast. *Anchoring*—lying at anchor. *Yon*—adds vividness to the picture. *Idly*—because the sails are doing no work. *Flaps*—moves backwards, and forwards with a fluttering sound. *Gale*—wind. *A melancholy band*—a sorrowful company. *Shore*—is distinguished from 'strand'. The word seems to be used here for land farther from the sea than 'strand', *Darken*—the emigrants by their departure fill the country with gloom. *Contented toil*—contentment with a life of labour. *Hospitable care*—virtue of hospitality

or careful attendance on guests. *Connubial tenderness*—tender relations between husband and wife. *Piety*—deep religious faith. *With wishes placed above*—having its wishes fixed on heaven. *Steady loyalty*—steadfast attachment to all. *Faithful love*—true love. *Loveliest maid*—charming nymph. The classical writers regard Poetry as a heavenly nymph, *Still*—always. *First to fly.....invade*—poetry flies away from the land whenever sensual joys invade it. Luxury and Poetry cannot live together. When people indulge in sensual pleasures, Poetry bids farewell to them,

Explanation.—*Unfit in these.....fame*—In these shameful times people care more for wealth and luxury than the simple pleasures of life. Poetry fails to touch the hearts of the people, which is the true aim of Poetry, and also to win fame by courageous advocacy of lofty ideals.

Explanation.—*Dear charming.....me so*—Poetry has been addressed by the poet as a beautiful celestial goddess. He has felt ashamed to call himself a poet, for people now-a-days worship wealth, want luxury, sensual joys and poetry. Poetry is a source of pride to the poet when he is alone, though in public he feels ashamed. He owes to poetry all his happiness, and all his miseries too, for writing poetry was not a profitable occupation in Goldsmith's time. Goldsmith took to writing poetry when he was poor and the pursuit of poetry did not improve his condition.

Nobler arts—fine arts which are nobler than manual arts. These fine arts include music, painting, sculpture etc. *Or Torno's cliffs etc*—whether in the cold northern regions or in the hot tropical countries. Torno is the name of a river which divides the north-east of Sweden from Russia, and falls into the gulf of Bothnia. Along both sides of the river rise lofty hills *Pambamarca's side*—Pambamarca is a mountain of Ecuador in South America. *Equinoctial ferours*—equatorial heat; tropical heat. Properly the word 'equinoctial' is an adjective from 'equinox.' The equinoxes are (a) the two seasons in the year at which the sun's course lies on the celestial equator at which night and day are equal all over the world, and (b) the two opposite points on the celestial equator at which the sun in his annual course crosses it. Hence 'equinoctial' besides its ordinary meaning, may mean

'at or near the equator.' *Where winter.....snow*—where there is the perpetual winter. *Redress*—relieve. *Rigours*—severities. *Inclement*—severe. *Clime*—region.

Explanation.—*Thou guide.....inclement clime*—Poetic instinct is the guide to real excellence in the fine arts. The best painters, musicians, and sculptors are guided in their work by their own poetic instinct or are inspired by the noble poetry of great poets. (Barrett thinks that Goldsmith refers to the "noble aspirations for fame and distinction which are excited by reading stirring verse") Poetry holds up lofty ideals and stimulates very virtue in men. Whenever Poetry exerts its influence, whether in the hot tropical countries, it defies the flight of time. That is, the great poets of the world will never be forgotten, but will continue to be a solace to men in the hard conditions of varying climates. Poetry makes extreme heat or cold bearable,

Slighted—neglected. *Erring*—apt to make mistake. *Spurn*—despise. *Rage of gain*—inordinate love of gain. *Strain*—song. *Of native strength*—possessing natural strength. *Bless'd*—happy. *Trade's proud empire*—great empires built up by trade with foreign countries. *Hastes*—hastens. *Laboured mole*—a sea-wall or embankment built with much labour, mound or break-water reared with great labour. *As ocean.....away*—as the mole built by great labour is easily and suddenly washed away by the ocean, so a kingdom built up by trade with foreign countries is ruined very easily. *Self-dependent*—depending on its natural resources, not on foreign trade. *Can time defy*—can last for a long time without being ruined. *Billows*—dashing waves of the sea. *As rocks.....sky*—an empire depending on its own natural strength, (its natural resources like produce of the land) as compared to rocks which are the symbol of natural strength.

Explanation—*Aid slighted Truth.....the sky*—In concluding. *The Deserted Village* Goldsmith passionately invokes the spirit of poetry. As English people have become degenerate, Poetry cannot flourish in England. She, however, cannot die; she must flourish in some country or other. Wherever she may flourish, the poet asks her to help the

cause of truth. He wishes that the smoothly flowing verses of poets in all ages and countries should teach men to depise the passion for gain and luxury. Poetry should teach men that countries possessing natural strength may be very happy even though they may be poor. She should also teach men that a great empire with its artificial prosperity due to foreign trade suddenly collapses, just as the artificial pier, which is built with so much human labour, is suddenly away by the waves; whereas a country whose power and greatness depend upon her own natural strength, her own peasantry and domestic agriculture successfully resists the ravages of time, just as the rocks with their natural strength successfully resist the dashing waves of the sea also the inclemencies of foul weather.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. 1. What are the principal characteristics of Goldsmith's Poetry? Bring out the classical and romantic elements in his style.

Ans. See Introduction.

Q. 2. What was Goldsmith's main purpose in writing "The Deserted Village"?

Ans. Goldsmith's aim in writing. *The Deserted Village* was to condemn the increase of wealth and luxury among English people and the consequent depopulation of the country. He sincerely believed, as he writes in his dedication of the poem to his friend Sir Joshua Reynolds, that the miseries of the people he had pictured in the poem were caused by the growing wealth of the English landlords and traders who were ejecting the villagers from their homes.

But Goldsmith interests his readers much more by his description of the village of Lissoy (Auburn) and its inhabitants than by his economic theories. His description of the simple merry rustic life of the clergyman and the schoolmaster, of the village inn, and of the miseries of the people who were emigrating to America, is vivid and telling.

Q. 3. What are the sounds of mirth that were once heard at Auburn? Who was the solitary 'widow'?

Ans. See Analysis or Paraphrase of Lines 113-136. The widow was one Catherine Giraghty.

Q. 4. Describe the scene where Goldsmith pictures the people of Auburn migrating to America. Describe the miseries of exiled life.

Ans. See Analysis and Paraphrase of Ll. 341-384.

Q. 5. Give the substance of Goldsmith's condemnation of luxury.

Ans. See Analysis and Paraphrase of Ll. 315-406.

Q. 6. Give the substance of Goldsmith's invocation to Poetry. What do you gather about the condition of poets in Goldsmith's time?

Ans. See Paraphrase of Ll. 407-430. Poets in Goldsmith's time were a neglected race.

Q. 7. "Ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay."

Write an essay on these lines.

Ans. See Goldsmith's Economic Theory.

Q. 8. Discuss the arguments which identify Lissoy with Auburn.

Ans. See Introduction.

Q. 9. Account for the popularity of The "Deserted Village."

Ans. See Critical Estimate of the "Deserted Village" in Introduction.

Q. 10. Discuss the economic theories of Goldsmith's (as expressed in "The Deserted Village").

Ans. See Introduction.

Q. 11. Give the substance of Goldsmith's address in Auburn, mentioning the interesting features of the village.

Ans. See Analysis or Paraphrase of Lines 1-34.

Q. 12. Describe the woeful change that has come upon Auburn.

Ans. See Analysis or Paraphrase of Ll. 35-50.

Q. 13. Give the substance of, or quote from memory, Goldsmith's lament over the disappearance of the bold peasantry.

Ans. See Analysis or Paraphrase of Lines 51-74.

Q. 14. Give the substance of Goldsmith's reflections upon a retired life.

Ans. See Analysis or Paraphrase of Ll. 75-112.

Q. 15. Contrast Auburn as a deserted village with what it has been before.

Ans. See Analysis or Paraphrase of Ll. 1-50 and 113-136.

Q. 16. Point out the autobiographical allusions in "The Deserted Village".

Ans. The following lines in *The Deserted Village* have a reference to the personal habits and character of Goldsmith—

- (a) Ll. 1-34
- (b) Ll. 83-96
- (c) Ll. 113-136
- (d) Ll. 411-416

Give the substance of the lines.

Q. 17. Cite examples of Goldsmith's humour.

Ans. See under 'Critical Estimate' of *The Deserted Village*.

Q. 18. What is meant by the criticism that "The Deserted Village" is made up of incongruous parts?

Ans. According to Macaulay Goldsmith sometimes pictures Auburn as an English village and sometimes as an Irish village. See the question discussed under "Where is Auburn?"

Q. 19. (a) Give a pen-picture of the Village Preacher, (b) Who is the original of the picture?

Ans. (a) The village preacher lived in his humble cottage, contented with the modest income of forty pounds a year. He stuck to his post and his humble and godly way of life neither flattering anybody nor seeking self-advancement

but trying heart and soul to uplift the wretched and to do good to others. His house was famous for hospitality. The old beggar, the ruined spendthrift, the disabled soldier found ready shelter there. The village preacher had a very kind soul. He helped all who sought his help without caring to know whether they deserved this help or not. His heart melted at the mere recital of distress, so that he gave not from charity but from pity. He had shortcomings too, such as excessive charity; but these sprang out of his generous nature, and could be regarded as virtues carried to excess. He was prompt in the discharge of priestly duties. He was never tired of teaching people how to live a better life and he himself set an example to allure them to the joys of heaven. He stood by the dying man's bedside and gave him spiritual comfort.

At church his quiet looks lent a beauty and dignity to the place of worship. Religious teachings as they flowed from his eloquent lips, carried double weight, and melted the hearts of even scoffers. At the end of the religious service in the church he would be surrounded by simple rustics; and even children would pluck at his gowl to be favoured with his genial smile. Thus he won the love and respect of all. He too loved the villagers warmly. He was happy when they were happy and shed tears when they suffered. But though his heart with its laughter and tears was given to them, his serious thoughts were lifted above the petty troubles of earthly life and were centred upon God.

(b) The village preacher has been identified with Goldsmith's father. The poet's father, Rev. Charles Goldsmith was a Protestant clergyman in a village in Ireland. His was an ideal character, and Goldsmith pays a fine tribute to it in the present portrait. The poet's uncle Contarine and elder brother Henry Goldsmith too were typical clergymen. Their lives also might have suggested material for the village preacher's portrait.

Q. 20. Describe, after Goldsmith, the village schoolmaster. Who is the original of the picture?

Ans. The village schoolmaster held his little school in his noisy mansion. He was a good schoolmaster, good in teach-

ing and in discipline. He was a stern-looking man, a terror to all the boys, specially to those who kept away from school and neglected their studies. From his very looks, as he entered the school-room, the boys knew what would be their fate during the day. They pretended to laugh at the jokes he cut only to please him. Whenever he looked angry, the terrible news would be carried rapidly in soft whispers from boy to boy. He loved learning; he wanted the boys to learn, and so he was strict and severe. But in spite of his outward severity he was a good, kind man. The ignorant villagers, one and all regarded him as a man of vast learning. As signs of his vast learning the villagers said that the schoolmaster was able to write and work out sums, to measure lands and presage correctly the terms and tides. Moreover he had considerable skill in arguments. Even when he was defeated, he would go on arguing still. He was fond of using big, high-sounding words which made the ignorant villagers stare at him in wonder and admiration. But now everything is passed, even the very place of his triumph is forgotten.

The origin of the village schoolmaster is supposed to be Paddy Byrne who kept a school at Lissoy, which the poet attended in his childhood.

Q. 21. Reproduce in your own words Goldsmith's description of the village inn.

Ans. Close to the thorn tree stood the village inn which was once a centre for news and merriment. Its sign-board attracted the notice of the passer-by. The draughts of ale that were sold there often cheered and refreshed the thirsty soul. It was the meeting place of merry old man and smiling labourers. The village politicians seriously discussed stale news over their ale. But the inn is a now heap of ruins.

There was a time when the inn was in all its glory. The walls were white-washed and the floor was well-sprinkled with sand, and a clock in a wooden case stood just behind the door. There was a chest of drawers which was also used as a bed at night. Pictures decorated the walls and hid their defects. The twelve good rules of Charles I were also hung up on the walls. On the table was placed the

board for the game of goose. In summer the hearth was decorated with branches of aspen and various plants, and the chimney piece was decorated with a row of tea-cups which were too much cracked. But nothing could save the old inn from the general ruin. Now it has sunk into obscurity, Never again will the labourer go there to forget his worries in cheering liquor. Never again will there be heard the news delivered by the farmer, the tales of the barber, and the ballads of Robin Hood or other green wood songs. Never again will the blacksmith go there to listen to them. Never again will the inn-keeper look to the comforts of his customers, nor will the shy waitress be seen there drinking a little before she passed the pot of ale on to others.

Q. 22. Explain the following passages:—

- (1) The dancing pair.....other down (25-26)
- (2) These were the charms.....fled (31-34)
- (3) Amidst thy bowers.....plain (37-40)
- (4) And, trembling.....the land (49-50)
- (5) Ill fares.....decay (51-52)
- (6) Princes and lords.....supplied (53-56)
- (7) But times are alter'd.....pride (63-68)
- (8) In all my wandering.....saw (83-92)
- (9) And as a hare.....at last (93-96)
- (10) O bless'd retirement.....fly (97-102)
- (11) For him.....be pass'd (133-112)
- (12) All but you.....pensive plain (129-136)
- (13) A man he was.....year (141-142)
- (14) Remote from towns.....rise (143-148)
- (15) The ruin'd spendthrift.....allow'd (153-154)
- (16) The broken soldier.....won (155-158)
- (17) Pleased with.....charity began (159-162)
- (18) Thus to relieve.....led the way (163-170)
- (19) Beside the bed.....whisper'd praise (171-176)
- (20) Truth from his lips.....pray (179-180)
- (21) To them his heart.....its head (187-192)
- (22) Yet he was kind.....in fault (205-206)
- (23) The village.....he knew (207-216)
- (24) Low lies the house.....went round (221-224)
- (25) The pictures.....game of goose (231-232)
- (26) Vain transitory.....man's heart (237-240)

- (27) Yet ! let the rich.....gloss of art (251-254)
 (28) Spontaneous joys.....this be joy (255-264)
 (29) 'Tis yours to judge.....happy land (267-268)
 (30) Proud swells.....the same (269-274)
 (31) Not so the loss.....and bounds (275-278)
 (32) The robe.....their growth (279-280)
 (33) Around the world.....the fall (283-286)
 (34) As some fair.....garden and a grave (287-302)
 (35) Where then.....denied (303-308)
 (36) Here, while the courtier.....gorgeous train (315-320)
 (37) Tumultuous grandeur.....glare (321-322)
 (38) And these thy setious.....brown (325-337)
 (39) Ah, no.....to their won (341-344)
 (40) Far different.....skies (345-358)
 (41) His lovely.....father's arms (375-378)
 (42) With louder.....of grief (379-384)
 (43) How do thy potions.....destroy (387-388)
 (44) Kingdoms by thee.....ruin round (389-394)
 (45) E'en now.....leave the land (395-398)
 (46) And thou, sweet Poetry.....fame (407-410)
 (47) Dear charming.....thee well (411-416)
 (48) Farewell.....the sky (417-430)

Ans. See Notes and Explanations.

Q. 23. Annotate the following:—

The twelve good rules; the royal game of goose; gloss of art; silken sloth; sickly trade; wild Altama; rattling terrors of the vengeful snake; in sorrow doubly dear; a bloated mass of rank; unwieldy woe; Tornos cliff; Pambamarca's side; A breath can make them as a breath has made; Trade's unfeeling train; husband out life's taper; sad historian of the pensive plain; passing rich with forty pounds; even his failings leaned to virtue's side; terms and tides; news much staler than their ale; pictures placed for ornament and use.

Ans. See Notes and Explanations.

WALTER DE LA MARE

(b. 1873)

Life and Works—

Walter De La Mare was born in Carleston, a village of Kent in England in April 1873. He was dreamy and fond of reading and thinking from his very boyhood. He was educated at St. Paul's Cathedral Choir School. He took a job in the London office of The Anglo-American Oil Company where he remained for eighteen years and spent his youth in the compilation of statistics. During leisure time he wrote poems. From his dry work he turned to a love of fantastic beauty which has always been a characteristic feature of his poetry.

Songs of Childhood appeared in 1902 which he published under the pseudonym of *Walter Ramal*. In 1904 he published *Henry Brocken*, a novel. *Poems* followed in 1906, and *The Three Mulla Mulgars* appeared in 1910. By 1930 De La Mare wrote over twenty-five volumes which fall, according to Untermeyer, into four categories; (1) The poetry of metaphysical phantasy; (2) the poems to and of children; (3) the mixture of prose and verse achieved in *Ding Dong Bell* (1924); (4) the introspective prose.

Among De La Mare's later works are the following:—*The Return* (1910) *Peacock Pie* (1913); *Flora*, a book of drawings by Pamela Bianco with illustrative poems by the author; *Collected Poems* (1902—1918); *Down-a-down Deny* (1921); *Come Hither* (1923) an Anthology of English poetry "for youths of all ages"; *The Connoisseur and Other Stories* (1926); *Told again* (1927) a Fairy Tale retold for children; *stories from the Bible* (1929) *Deserted Islands and Robinson Crusoe* (1930); *Poems for children* (1930); *On the Edge* (1930) a book of short stories; *The Eighteen-Eighties* (1931).

Characteristics as a Poet—

Walter De La Mare is among the greatest poets of English dream poetry, and is beyond doubt the greatest English poet of childhood. His *Songs of Childhood* have won universal admiration. He enters fully in the mind of the child and sees the world through the eyes of the child.

The poet of Dremland, mystery, and phantasy—De La Mare has a peculiar fascination for the supernatural and the weird, but he seems to be haunted not by the love of the ghost or goblin but he is haunted by beauty. There are two suppositions in this respect. (1) The poet has an Ideal Beauty and he dwells continually in its presence but Beauty's presence is withdrawn and he is haunted by the memory of the liveliness he has lost; (2) He sees his Ideal and Beauty in his dream which he seeks to realise in his writing moments, and so long as he is unable to get it, he is always longing for it and has no rest. It seems tight to take the first view. The poet feels that he is an exile from the dream-land of Beauty in which he once lived and now, on earth, has lost it. He again, ardently wishes to dwell in that Dream-Land of Beauty.

Walter De La Mare has therefore created from instinctive inclination a fairy twilight world, world of wonder and phantasy which is the home of perpetual youth. The delicacy of his magical charm by which he creates his atmosphere of elfin grace is rarely excelled by any other poet. Coleridge has done the same thing in *Christabel* and *Ancient Mariner* but De La Mare has also succeeded in creating an air of mystery and awe even in the full light of a summer day in such poems as "The sleeper." This vision of the remote, the unfamiliar is quite possible for De La Mare who is extremely sensitive to psychic influences through which he becomes conscious of a surrounding spirit world. It is the haunting passion of De La Mare to see the vision of the glory that has passed and to make the readers feel what Beauty lies beyond the veil.

De La Mare's Melancholy—It is this extreme sensitiveness to Beauty which makes De La Mare melancholy. He loves beauty passionately and as beauty of the world is transitory a feeling of thoughtful sadness lights temporarily upon the poet's heart:

For human beauty is a sight
To sadden, rather than delight,
Being the prelude of a lay
Whose burden is decay.

In the poem *Haunted* he asks "But thou, Oman, what rest hast thou? And in *They Told Me* we read:

Sometimes it seemed my own heart heard
Inland the sorrow of the sea.

These are the instances of De La Mare's melancholy moods but we must remember the words of Philip James Bailey that "the ground of all great thoughts is sadness." The poet's sense of gladness and sorrow is more intense than that of average folk.

His Symbolism—Walter De La Mare is a master of symbolism. A symbol is often a visible emblem of that which is invisible. For instance we have not seen truth in the abstract. We ask what truth is. We ask that object in the natural world is the symbol or emblem of truth. The answer is "Light." Now the poet who has the vision of Reality behind the outer veil of Nature takes the natural objects to symbolise his vision of the Invisible world. He makes the reader feel or see what he saw. The unseen is brought before our mind's eye through the symbols. Of this symbolism which is important in poetry De La Mare is a master. His poems recall "memories of some long-lost and beautiful world of dreams, some realm of flowers in which he once wandered, and the mother-tongue of which was surely music."

Had the gods loved me I had lain
Where dandel is, and thorn,
And the wild night-bird's nightling strain
Trembles in boughs forlorn.
Nay, out they loved me not, and I
Must needs a stranger be,
Whose every exiled day gone by
Aches with their memory."

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

It is the privilege of poets to imagine fanciful situations and placing themselves in strange circumstances to imagine the part they would play when so situated. We all dream the part they would play when so situated. We all dream strange and impossible dreams but a poet does more. He gives poetic expression to his ideas which we cannot do.

There is no man who is perfectly satisfied with all the circumstances in which he has to live his life. He desires a better state. But it is not given to all to change their environments or alter circumstances to suit their pleasure. What we fail to bring about in the real world, we create by imagination and try to escape from the unpleasant realities of our day-to-day life. Day dreaming is a pastime with us all. In case of children imagination plays a more important part. They are almost constantly indulging in creating worlds of their own. One question which would interest children would be to imagine themselves monarchs of big kingdoms. How would they live then? What things would gratify their love of pleasure and beauty? The reply perhaps would not be much different from what Walter De La Mare gives us in this poem. To his discerning eye childhood seems an open book and he has a direct approach to the imagination of children. He knows child psychology well and delights to describe it for his readers.

Then, the modern civilization presents many a complex problem. Many thoughtful persons do not look upon its progress and achievements as a pure blessing to mankind. Some poets, like Walter De La Mare, try to escape from it and indulge themselves in describing simple and elemental things. In such a mood the present poem was written. The dreams may be fantastic but they give relief to our feelings and monotony of life.

The remarkable simplicity of the poem is combined with a rich imagination and perfect artistic expression. The appeal is not merely to the child or our own puerile imagination; it conveys a message also. Perhaps we can find a greater measure of happiness in the love of nature than in multiplying our wants and craving for the products of the modern age. Luxuries may give comfort to our body and delight our senses, but they leave the soul starving. What nature gives is healthy food for body as well as the soul.

Scenes of splendour usually associated with oriental life are beautifully described here. Things which appeal to a child's imagination are alone mentioned. The sense of possession, love of colour, and freedom of movement find an

adequate expression. No pleasure which a child cannot experience is mentioned. Descriptions are vivid and at times gorgeous, but there is no over laying of colours.

The last stanza is really beautiful. Man grows to his full stature and feels mighty and happy in his limitless possessions.

Analysis—

The first stanza describes the glories of court and animal life which would contribute to his happiness if the poet became the ruler of an empire.

Then his daily life and its royal pleasure are described. The second stanza gives us an idea of the daily round of pleasures in which the emperor would indulge.

In the third stanza we are given an idea of the emperor's neat attire, gorgeous clothes and bright jewels that he would wear when going out on morning drives.

The sense of possession of the vast kingdom, rich in its natural beauties and products, which the emperor would feel is described in the concluding stanza.

Metre—

The poem has four stanzas of eight lines each. The first, third, fifth and seventh lines are iambic tetrametre, that is they have four feet each. The other lines are iambic trimetre. This arrangement enhances the song value of the poem. Extra syllables are also introduced to relieve monotony. The rhyming scheme is—

a b a b c c c b.

NOTES

Tartary

Tartary, or Tatar, is a region of Central Asia, now divided into Chinese or East Turkestan and West Turkestan, proper. In a more extended sense Tartary comprises Manchuria, Mongolia, Soungharia, the whole of Turkestan, and Russian Central Asia, with parts of Europe east of the Dneiper and Don, at different times dominated by the warlike Tartar tribes of the Middle Ages and their descendants of the mixed race. Walter De La Mare refers to it as one of the biggest empires at one time.

Stanza 1

The poet is imagining his rich possessions and the glories of his court if he were to become the emperor of Tartary and rule over that empire.

If I were—if he could ever become. Lord of Tartary—ruler of one of the biggest empires comprising many big countries. Myself and me alone—possessed undivided power without any interference from any body. My bed... ivory—he is thinking of the precious and rare things from his personal comfort. Beaten gold—gold hammered or forged into shape. The throne would be made of solid gold. Court—sovereign's residence. Flaunt—display oneself or one's finery. Peacocks flaunt—dancing peacocks displaying the beauty on their feathers. Haunt—stay habitually, Slant—swim and glide obliquely. Athwart—crosswise, across from side to side. Fishes slant their fins athwart the sun—the rays of the sun, falling upon the obliquely moving fins of the gliding fishes, would make them brightly shine in colours.

Explanation.—If were Lord.....athwart the sun—If the poet could become the undisputed monarch of Tartary he would make his bed of ivory and throne of solid gold. Peacocks would be proudly dancing in his courtyards and his forests would be haunted by tigers. In the clear waters of pools there would be big fishes the fins of which would shine when they would be gliding and swimming obliquely in water and the slanting rays of the sun would fall on them displaying their colours.

Stanza 2

In this stanza he describes the pleasures he would enjoy if he were the monarch. In the previous stanza we have a description of his possession and now his daily round of pleasures is described.

Trumpeters—those who sound trumpets. Summon me—when meals would be ready trumpets will announce them. Bray—sound loudly. The sound of trumpet, as the cry of ass, is called 'bray.' Yellow at honey—the light would be subdued and pleasant to the eye. The lamps would be

-giving multi-coloured lights. Harp and flute and mandoline—They are all musical instruments. The harp is a stringed instrument, roughly triangular, played with the fingers; the flute is a wind instrument, pipe-shaped with holes stopped by fingers or keys; and the mandoline has four to six metal strings stretched on deeply-rounded body.

Explanation.—If I were Lord.....sweet and gay—If he were the monarch his meals would be announced by the trumpets sounded in courtyards. In the evenings multi-coloured lights would shine and musicians would regale him with sweet and pleasant music.

Stanza 3

Now he describes the articles of his personal use, his magnificent dress, jewels and chariot.

Robe of beads—the royal robes would be made of precious jewels and beads of different colours. Instead of ordinary thread of silk, his robes would be woven of the strings of precious pearls and stones. Clustered—thickly knit together. And ere.....star—before dawn. Wane—lose its brightness and become pale. Morning-star—Venus, when visible in the east before sunrise. The same star is the evening star when it is visible just after sunset. Don—wear; put on. Scimitar—oriental curved sword usually broadening towards point. Zebra—an animal allied to horse or ass and having stripes on its body. Glade—clear open space or passage between forest trees.

Explanation.—If I were Lord.....dark glades—He would wear robes made of the strings of precious pearls and stones of various colours. They would be too numerous to count. Early in the morning he would dress himself in his royal robes and have his sword hanging by his side. And then he would drive in his royal chariot, drawn by no less than seven zebras, and ride through the open passages of the thick forests of Tartary.

Stanza 4

This describes the wide extent of the empire and the proud sense of possession that he would feel if he were to become its monarch.

Silver-pale—bright clear water. Glen—narrow valley. Dale—valley. Flashing—bright stars sometimes shooting across the sky Trembling—the surface of which is disturbed by the wind. Like foamless seas—extensive lakes as big as seas, but without storms and tempests. Bird-delighting—which afford delight to birds by their fragrance. Citron trees—a species of trees bearing lemon-like, but large and less acid, fruit of thick skin. Purple—valleys take this colour when viewed from a distance.

Explanation.—Lord of the fruits.....purple vale—His possessions would be extensive and he would be the monarch of all that he would survey. He would be the lord of Tartary's rivers, orchards, mountains, valleys, forests and extensive lakes. Its fragrant breezes and stars overhead would be his his source of delight, as would be the happy birds in valleys enjoying the scent of citron-trees.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. 1. How would you spend your money if you won a lottery of a lakh of rupees?

Q. 2. Do you think that the poet has given us a picture of an ideal monarch?

Ans. No. The monarch thinks only of his own joys, pleasures and great possessions, but does not mention even once his duties towards his people.

Q. 3. Explain fully,—

(i) Lines 7-8.

(ii) „ 25-32.

Ans. See the Notes.

Q. 4. How far does the poet give us a picture of child mentality in the poem?

Ans. See the introduction.

Q. 5. What is the message of the poem?

Ans. See introduction.

W. H. DAVIES.

(B. 1871)

Life and Works—William Henry Davies was born on April 20, 1871, in a public house at Newport, Wales. When he was at school he organised a robber gang and stole from merchants in the neighbourhood. He left school and was apprenticed to a picture frame-maker, but soon he left the job and crossed the Atlantic.

He led a life of a vagabond in New York. His tramping career came to a close abruptly in his thirtieth year. In boarding a Canadian train he slipped under the wheels and had his right foot cut off. When he returned to England he resolved to be a poet. He lived on begging and singing. He read in the public libraries. "I was determined," he wrote afterwards, "that, as my body had failed, my brains should now have the chance they had longed for, when the spirit had been bullied into submission by the body's activity."

The Soul's Destroyer, a volume of his poems, appeared in 1905 and established his reputation as a poet. Between 1905 and 1930 he published twenty volumes of poetry and eight volumes of prose. He is acquainted with Defoe, Bunyan, and the Bible but his writings are based on his experiences. "My heart has many a sweet bird's" he writes in one of his lyrics, "and one that's all my own."

His poetical works include *Songs of Joy* [1917], *Farewell to Poesy* [1917], *Foliage* [1917], *Nature Poem etc.* [1923], *Captive Lion* [1921], *Secrets* [1924], *A Poet's Calendar* [1927], *Ambition* [1929], and *Fortynine Poems* [1929]. His prose works include *Beggars*, *A weak woman*, *A Poet Pilgrimage*, *Late Days* [1925], *Dancing Maid* [1927]. *The Autobiography of a Super Tramp*, with a preface by Bernard Shaw appeared in 1908.

HIS POETIC GENIUS

As a poet of Nature—

The poetic genius of Mr. Davies is characterised by absolute simplicity, and an independence of mind which is completely isolated from literary tradition and influence. He

writes from his own experiences and his method is altogether simple. But there is no deep emotion in the poetry of Davies. His poems about human life, love, and nature are never intense. In his later poems, however, the autobiographical interest becomes less and less and the love of Nature becomes the commanding passion. "It recurs more and more frequently, until the autobiographical element is almost eliminated; and just as it is the main motive of the later poetry, so it is its happiest inspiration. It is rather a pagan feeling, taking great joy in the beauty of the material world, revelling in the impressions of sight and a scent, sound and taste and touch. It is human enough to embrace the whole world of animal life, but it seeks no spirit behind the phenomena of Nature, and cares precisely nothing about its more scientific aspect." Like a child he is content to watch with joy and light-hearted ease the beauty of Nature:

"For Lord, how merry now am I !
 Tickling with straw the butterfly,
 Where she doth in her clean, white dress.
 Sit on a green leaf, motionless,
 To hear Bees hum away the hours,"

As a poet of love—

W. H. Davies is primarily a poet of Nature but he is also a poet of love. His love poems, however, are entirely sensuous and passionate. Of any spiritual element in love he has little or nothing to say. He is on certain occasions an ardent lover and pays like an Elizabethan courtier a love compliment.

"Not for her beauty will I praise the moon,
 But that she lights thy purer face and throat;
 The only praise I'll give the nightingale
 Is that she draws from thee a richer note."
 Then he pictures a beloved in an angry mood.
 My love sits angry; See !
 Her foot shakes in the light;
 Her timid little foot
 That else would hide from sight.

"My love, she, is so fair
 When in this angry way,
 That did she guess my thoughts
 She'd quatrel every day."

There is no spiritual touch in love. He is very simple in his utterance, and almost always sings spontaneously of the tenderness of the heart rather than the greatness of intellect.

His style:—

The simplicity of W. H. Davies is illustrated not only in the thought and themes of his poetry but also in his style. His style is simple and artless because his emotions are simple and spring from simple themes. In his later verse the faults of metre and rhyme disappear, so that the verse acquires a new grace. It gains also from a wider variety of form. The verses are as short as one foot or as long as five, and there may be stanzas of only two lines or anything up to eight. There are even pieces in closed couplets and blank verse. This variety of Davies is not a departure from the traditional practice; it is only a modification of the traditional forms of poetry. Its basis, almost invariably, is the *iamb* unit and rarely is any other measure employed. The *iamb* is particularly suited to the simple and direct nature of his work. The *iambic* metre is also used by Davies in his longer poems. It is desirable that he would modify the form and introduce a variety. But the need does not seem to be pressing. The simple feelings about common objects in life require no complex form which is often employed to express more complex feelings or experiences.

Appreciation:—

"Nearly all his poems," remarks Harold William, "are fresh, springing from a mind which sees the world not as others see. Women and children, bird song and sunest, ale and the vagrant life, the characters of doss-house and slum—of these he sings for the joy and interest of seeing and feeling. And he wisely forswears encumbering his poetry with intellectualisms. There is nothing sophisticated in his thought or style. In restrained simplicity he is sometimes not far

from Wordsworth, in the fleeting beauty of his word-music not unlike Herrick.

Mr. Davies' genius as a poet is limited; he has no great vigour nor intellectual force, nor can he successfully embark on a long poem. He has no message, no strong thought for his generation. He is content if he may sing in his own words, year, by year the changeless and simple facts of life and nature, and he rarely fails to render these sincerely and with a clear music."

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Argument —

The poet invokes contentment as a soothing balm which softens the hard lot of a labourer, and makes him happy and cheerful. In his eager quest of contentment among the rich and the poor, he invariably found it in some solitary, peaceful corner. Contentment he found, far away from the din of busy humanity, in the silence of his own study, where the merry sound of the moths that circled about around his lamp, was the only sign of life. Often he found contentment in a garden on a dark summer night, when the air was soothingly refreshing, and the sky beautifully illuminated by myriad shining stars.

Criticism—

The poem is the expression of a settled conviction which is formed after the feverish activities of youth are over. The poet, who had sought happiness in various regions with ever succeeding disappointments, at last disabled and discontented, took to the settled life of a studious scholar and writer, and found contentment either in the solitude of his study, where the pleasant hum of the moths, which were attracted by his lamp, was the only sign of life. or in his garden on summer nights when the air was cool and refreshing and the beautifully shining stars lent a pleasing radiance to the heavens.

The personal experiences of the author supply the impulse of the poem which is characterised by vivid realistic touches. The moths that on the poet's lighted ceiling kiss their shadows as they dance and dance around; and the cool,

refreshing breeze gently blowing in his garden on dark, starry, summer nights constitute his personal reminiscences. The poem breathes an air of quiet resignation, and redeems considerably the excesses of his vagrant life. It is a signpost to unknowing green youths, who seek happiness in a manner in which the poet did when he was young and able, and eventually come to realise their folly. True contentment consists in the peace of mind a man possesses, and is a constant companion of those who have few interests and no ambitions.

Analysis—

- (i) Contentment is to be found in quiet lonely places.
- (ii) The poet finds contentment in his quiet study at night.
- (iii) He also finds it in a garden at night when the bats fly in the dark air and numberless stars shine in the blue sky.

Metre—

Each line in the poem consists of ten syllables, divided into five feet of two syllables each in which the accent or stress falls on the second syllable, while the first remains unstressed. This is technically known as *iambic pentametre*. The lines may be scanned thus:—

Here in/my room/when full/of hap/py dreams

With no/life heard/beyond/that mer/ry sound

Of moths/that'on/light/ed ceil/ing kiss

Their sha/dows as/they dance/and dance/around,

Notes and Explanations

Oh—This interjection is an exclamation of wonder, pain, desire, fear, etc. The form 'Oh' is the more usual in prose. When prefixed to vocative names its form is usually O, but when separated with a comma the form is Oh. Here it expresses the yearning of one who misses contentment. Sweet content—contentment is sweet because it is a balm to a restless mind. Turns—changes. Labourer's sweat—perspiration due to the hard work of a labourer. Tears of joy—

excessive joy and laughter bring tears to our eyes as great sorrow does. Shines—here used as a transitive verb. Brightens with joy or cheerfulness. Roughest face—weather-beaten face of a labourer bearing on it marks of sadness and hard life.

Explanation.—Oh, sweet content.....the roughest face—The poet invokes contentment which is so delightful and serves as a balm to our restless mind. It is contentment that sweetens the life of a labourer and makes his hard task tolerable. He suffers all hardships cheerfully when contented. It brings him joy though his life may be full of worries and arduous task may be his lot.

High and low—people of all conditions; rich and poor alike. Found you still—always found contentment in or among. Some love quiet place—among people living far away from the feverish activities of life; in remote, peaceful places free from the din and bustle of life.

Explanation.—How often have I..... quiet place—When the poet tried to find contented people among the 'rich or poor he invariably found that people living in remote and quiet places, free from the din and bustle of ceaseless activities, were alone happy and contented.

When full of happy dreams—when he is indulging in poetic thoughts and soaring into realms of imagination as poets are wont to do. With no life heard—no sound of living beings reaches his ear. Beyond—excepting that of Merry sound of moths—winged insects which fly round a light and make a buzzing sound as if enjoying their circling motion. Lighted ceiling—the lamp which is hanging in his room from the ceiling. Kiss their shadows—in their wild circling movement it seems as if the moths were attempting to kiss their own shadows. As they dance and.....around—while they are making a circular movement all the time.

Explanation.—Here, in my room.....dance around—The poet says that he found contentment only among people living in remote places far away from the feverish activities of mankind. And then he gives an illustration of his own quiet study room. He sits there lost in happy thoughts, and experiences feelings of contentment, when he is cut off from the world and its noisy activities; and the only

sound he hears is of the moths constantly moving round the light in his room and making a buzzing noise. In such quiet places when he sits abstracted he knows what contentment is.

Or in a garden—another place where he can feel contented and forget the worries of the world. On a summer's night—in winter it would not be pleasant at that time. Blink—move the eyelids; look with eyes opening and shutting. Blind bat—because the bat cannot see in day time. Dark and solemn air.....wings—It is an evening scene, when the air is supposed to grow dark mysteriously and to feel sleep and bats come out of their nests. It is a nice picture when the poet imagines the atmosphere to blink on feeling sleepy, because darkness is growing and there is spreading darkness all round. Heaven's bright face—the bright clear sky which we have in day time. Twitch—more with sudden involuntary motion, especially limbs and features. And heaven's bright.....stars—stars appearing in the sky, which has grown dark on account of the night. The sky is compared to a face and the appearance of stars to the twitching of its features. The use of 'blink' and 'twitch' for the face of the sky make a fine picture.

Explanation.—Or in a garden.....in thousands there—Another place where the poet can feel contented and forget the worries of the world is a garden on a summer evening when darkness is growing and the night is gradually advancing. It is the time when bats come out of their nests and the atmosphere is calm and tranquil. The bright clear sky of the day time grows dark and stars begin to shine in the firmament.

QUESTION AND ANSWERS

Q. 1. What is the poet's idea of contentment? Do you agree with him?

Ans. The poet believes that contentment is the only source of happiness in life and it can make even a labourer happy. See the Argument.

Give your own opinion, in your own words, and not whether happiness consists in contentment or not struggle in life.

Q. 2. Do you not think that man's progress would be impossible without discontent ?

Ans. If man were to be contented with his lot he would lose his instinct of progress. Divine discontent is the root of all progress as necessity is the mother of invention. But the poet praises contentment from another point of view. It is to teach man to control his greed if he wanted to be happy,

Q. 3. Compare the idea of contentment in this poem with that of any other poem you have read.

Ans. Read the three poems on contentment given in the book. Compare them and see Introduction to Barnabe Barnes.

Q. 4. write a note on the metre of the poem.

Ans. See the Introduction.

Q. 5. Explain fully:—

(i) "Oh, sweet content.....quiet place."

(ii) Here, in my room..... dance around."

(iii) Or in a garden.....thousands there.

Ans. See Notes.

SAY NOT, THE STRUGGLE NAUGHT AVAILETH

A Note on the poet.

Arthur Hugh Clough was born in Liverpool. His childhood was spent in America. But he was sent back to England where he received his education at Rugby and Oxford and was appointed a tutor and fellow of Oriel. He resigned his fellowship. Then he became Secretary of a Commission of Military Schools. He was an intimate friend of M. Arnold.

Clough's poetry is essentially serious in tone. His spirit was troubled with the religious controversy raging at the time. Naturally his 'piping took a troubled note.' But he was not overcome with his scepticism. He saw light some-

where in the future and sounded the note of hope. There is a stoical spirit in him; He preached a gospel of courageous endurance, and the doing of duty. He saw that victory was sure, that the westland was bright in rays of the sun, He is a poet of faith.

Summary

The poet encourages a group of defeated soldiers who have given up all hopes of success. He asks them not to think that the struggle they have to undergo and the wounds they have received in the last battle will go in vain, and that the enemy will never be vanquished. They hoped for victory but they have been duped. Now they are afraid of utter defeat. Their fear may prove false. It may be that the enemies have already taken to flight and are being pursued by the fellows of these soldiers who have lost their hearts. The once defeated army might have already been victorious, had they obtained the assistance of those who are lagging behind. Victory may come late but it is sure to come, if not here, somewhere far away. The waves of the sea exhaust all their energy in breaking the shore. They may not be successful in one place. But farther off the waters of the sea may cause breaches and may rush into the land through narrow creeks. The sun rises in the East, climbs slowly on the sky. Its rays do not redden the eastern horizon alone but even the Western land becomes bright in the sunshine. Victory is slow but sure, and the soldiers should not lose heart. They should fight on in spite of their reverses.

Allegorical Meaning.

In this poem Clough compares men who have to struggle hard in life, to soldiers. He encourages the disappointed soldiers in the battle of life saying that what seems to them failures are the stepping-stones to success. Victory over the evils of life is inevitable, if not within the brief space of human existence, surely in a life beyond. So men should not despair. They should support their family spirit with the hope of a bright future and do their duties as best as they can.

Historical Background.

Clough died in Italy. This poem was composed there in the last year of his life. He was perhaps thinking of

Peschiora or some other defeat suffered by the Isalians in their war with Austria.

Critical Appreciation.

This poem is the noblest expression of the poet's outlook on life. The poem is "affecting, eloquent and morally inspired." The truth that the poet preaches here is that life is to be lived and duty is to be done. This is stoicism; but this stoicism is not gloomy. In the last stanza the poet sounds a note of hope. Life on earth may be a failure but there is a life beyond; and the human soul, though crushed here, may attain victory there. This is the poet's message to the suffering humanity. This view of life is similar to Browning's idea about the nature of evil. The closing lines with their exquisite imagery are worthy of a far greater poet.

Notes and Explanations

Stanza 1. *Say not.....availeth*—don't say that the struggle you undergo is vain or useless. *Naught availeth*—avails nothing, is of no use. *The labour,....vain*—don't say that the labour you undergo and the wounds you receive in the battle are all useless. *The enemy faints not*—(don't say) the enemy does not become weaker. *Nor faileth*—is not defeated; does not yield. *Things.....remain*—there is no change in the course of battle.

Explanation—In these lines the poet says that the fighters should not complain that the struggles they have undergone have borne no fruit, that the wounds they have received are all for nothing, for their fighting has left no impression upon their enemies. They need not complain that the enemies have not lost their strength and have been overpowered by them, and things remained just as they were.

N. B.—Clough died in Italy, and this poem was composed in Italy in the last year of his life. He was perhaps thinking of *Peschisra* or some other defeat suffered by the Italians in their war with Austria. Hence the enemies referred to are the Austrians. Figuratively, the enemies are the desires and temptations of life with which human beings fight in the battle of life.

Stanza 2. *If hopes.....liars*—if hopes have been deceptive, fears also will prove equally deceptive. They hoped for victory and were defeated. They were afraid they would never succeed, this also would prove false. *It may be*—it is possible. *In you smoke concealed*—being hidden in the smoke issuing from the cannons there, and so being unseen by you. *Your comrades*—your fellow warriors. *Chase e'en.....fliers*—are still pursuing the flying enemy. *But for you*—if it were not for your vacillating attitude, attitude of doubt and fear. *Possess the field*—would have won the victory.

Explanation.—In this passage the poet encourages Italian soldiers who lost heart owing to their defeat in the hands of the Austrians. They expected victory and were disappointed. Now they are afraid that they will never succeed, But the progress of the battle cannot be watched from the place where the disheartened soldiers are sitting because the battlefield is covered with smoke. The poet suggests that probably the Austrians have by this time taken to flight and are being pursued by the Italian soldiers. He further suggests that the Italians might have won complete victory if they had not been deprived of the assistance of these stragglers. They had been defeated only for their numerical deficiency. Figuratively, the poet asks men to take heart and carry on struggle with the evils of this life in a body, as victory is inevitable and virtue is sure to overcome vice.

Stanza 3. *Tired waves*—waves that are weary with incessant dashing against shore. *Vainly breaking*—breaking against the shore but gaining no inch of ground. *Seem here.....gain*—to outward view the waves gain no ground. *Far back*—far behind in the interior. *Creeks and inlets*—narrow offshoots of the sea. *Through.....making*—making its way through; advancing through. *The main*—the ocean. *Flooding in*—rushing in with great flow of water.

Explanation.—In these lines the poet by means of a simile asks his fellowmen fatigued with the continuous struggle in life, to retain their courage and do their duty in the hope that all well be will hereafter. The waves of the sea constantly break against the shore but in spite of their efforts

they fail to gain an inch in one place. But their energy is not lost. In one place the sea is unsuccessful in gaining a bit of ground, but far behind, in some other parts of the shore, narrow creeks are formed through the constant rush of the waves, and water runs into the land in full tide, though silent in her activity. Similarly, in our actual life we should not lose heart at our apparent failures, as our efforts are sure to be crowned with success, though the success might come in distant future.

Stanza 4. Eastern windows—windows facing the east. *Light*—morning sunlight. *In front*—in the east. *The land is bright*—the land is flooded with sun-light. *The sun climbs slow*—the sun rises up the sky slowly.

Explanation.—In a magnificent image the poet brings out the fact that every human activity however small, has a far reaching significance.

The sunrise in the east, and its first rays enter the room through windows facing that direction. The sun then climbs slowly up the horizon and its rays are spread far and near, so that even the western land looks bright in sunshine. Similarly, no human attempt is vain. Every work has a brilliant future. It spreads its lustre far and wide. Sooner or later, here or hereafter man's struggles are bound to be crowned with success. So the poet asks his fellowmen to take heart not be disconcerted at the insignificance of their present work.

[N. B.—In another poem Clough wrote :—

'Tis better to have fought and lost
Than never to have fought at all.

SEA-FEVER

(John Masefield)

Life—John Masefield, the present poet Laureate, who succeeded Robert Bridges in this office on May 9, 1930, was born on June 1, 1874 in Ledbury, Herefordshire. His father, who was a lawyer and his mother died when he was still a

young boy, and he along with his brothers and sisters went to the home of an aunt in Ledbury. He remained there till the age of fourteen, attending the local school. Masfield was fond of excitement and adventure from an early age, and he would tramp the woods in search of novel experiences.

At the age of fourteen, Masfield was indentured to a merchant ship, his guardians hoping that this would curb his wild and reckless spirit. He remained in service for three years, enjoying the life of sea roving and visiting all parts of the globe. At length he got tired of this life and left the ship while in port in New York in April, 1895.

Masfield left for England in 1897. In 1902 appeared his first volume of verses entitled *Salt Water Ballads*. The opening poem of this volume, "A Consecration," announces Masfield's intention of being the poet of "the dust and the scum of the earth." The two poems "Cargos" and "Sea-Fever" were contained in this book.

He spent a summer in Devonshire with W. B. Yeats and the two poets discussed theories of art and poetry together. Masfield continued writing verses, plays and novels and his work soon began to attract attention.

Masfield was married in 1903 and he has one son and one daughter, Judith, who has illustrated some of her father's books.

The Laureate of the Sea—the most charming part of Mr. Masfield's work is his sea-poetry. He is the veritable "Laureate of the Sea." He knows the sea as thoroughly as Kipling knew the barracks.

Substance and Appreciation of the Poem.

Sea-Fever is one of the most popular and best known poem of Masfield. It appeared in the *Salt Water Ballads*, his first volume of verse, which was published in 1902. It expresses Masfield's real genius and temperament. Masfield had been a sailor, since the age of fourteen and he had wandered all over the globe. He had the roving instinct in his blood and his life on the sea had given him an opportunity of knowing it intimately. But what is more impor-

Stanza 2. The call of the sea is irresistible; only let the weather be clear and the breeze favourable. Mark the repetition of the phrase 'I must down to the seas again' at the beginning of every stanza.

The running tide—the ocean, full of waves. *Wild call*—irresistible call, which has a strange fascination. *Clear call*—strong attraction. *That may not be denied*—which, it is beyond my power to resist. *A windy day*—when ships used to be moved with sails, it was necessary to have a good breeze. A calm, still day, without any breeze would be of no use to a sailor. *The white clouds*—the dark, black clouds threaten rain and bad weather; but the white clouds, floating across the sky are quite harmless. *Flung spray*—the waves dashing against the ship. *Blown spume*—the foam blown by the wind. *Sea-gulls*—are a species of birds which fly over the sea.

Explanation.—This stanza gives a very graphic description of the joys of a sea-faring life. Masfield longs to go back to the sea, for the sea has a weird and irresistible fascination. Only let there be a good breeze and let the sky be clear and not overcast. Ah! how glorious it is to feel the waves dashing against the ship's sides, and to watch the foam blown about with the wind, and to hear the cry of the sea-gulls.

Stanza 3. The poet wants to lead the careless life of a sailor, wandering about aimlessly, listening to merry stories from fellow-seamen, and after a day's hard labour, to go quietly to sleep.

The vagrant gypsy life—a life of careless and aimless wandering, such as the gipsies lead. *The gull's way and the whale's way*—these are names given by sailors to the sea, for it is there that the sea-gulls and the whales live and move about just animals and men live and move on the earth. *Whetted*—sharpened; keen. *Where the.....knife*—where the wind is piercing and very strong and biting. *A merry yarn*—a delightful story. Sailors are full of such tales, as they have travelled widely all over the globe. *Laughing*—merry, sailors are proverbially very jolly. *Fellow-rover*—fellow-sailor. *Long trick*—'trick' is a nautical term and means the

fixed period of time for which a sailor has to work : it may be five, six, or eight hours. 'When the long trick's over, therefore, simply means when the sailor has finished his work for the day. Some annotators have unnecessarily read symbolism into this phrase and think that it refers to the end of human life. Such an interpretation is not only unwarranted by the text, but definitely against the spirit of the poem.

Explanation.—I want to become a sailor once again and lead a life of careless and aimless wandering. I long to go to the sea, where the sea-gulls fly and the whales swim and the wind is sharp and piercing. I would love to hear the simple and delightful stories which sailors tell each other; and after I have finished my allotted work for the day. I would go to bed and have a peaceful sleep full of sweet dreams. (It should be remembered that after a day of hard labour sleep is particularly peaceful and sweet).

THE QUALITY OF MERCY

A Note on the Author

William Shakespeare, the greatest poet and dramatist of England, was born at Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire on 22nd or 23rd April, 1564. He was educated at Stratford Grammar School where he learnt Latin, English, writing and Arithmetic, when he was thirteen, his father fell into misfortune. He was taken from school and made to help his father in his business. He married Anne Hathaway, eight years his senior. He travelled on foot to London where he spent twenty-third years of his life. In London he found employment at the theatres. He soon showed capacities as an actor, and shortly became a member of one of the chief acting companies of the day. By 1595 he was well-known and prospering. He came to have powerful friends and patrons. In 1616 he severed his connection with the stage and retired to Stratford. In the spring of 1616 he received a visit from his friends, Jonson and Drayton, and the festivity with which it was celebrated seems to have brought on a fever, of which he died on April 23rd.

Some of Shakespeare's Works

First Period (1588—1596.)

Love's Labour's Lost, Comedy of Errors, Romeo and Juliet.
Second Period (1596—1602.)

Merchant of Venice, Midsummer Night's Dream, Much Ado about Nothing, As You Like It, Twelfth Night.

Third Period (1602—1608.)

Julius Caesar, Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, Lear, Coriolanus.

Fourth Period (1608—1613.)

Cymbeline, Tempest, Winter's Tale, Poems.

Venus and Adonis Sonnets.

Shakespeare as a Poet and Dramatist

"Shakespeare was not of an age but for all time" (Ben Jonson.)

Shakespeare possesses a poetic and dramatic genius whose splendour and variety remain unrivalled till to-day. With his wealth of fancy, wit and humour he combines profoundest knowledge of human nature and the most extraordinary power of dissecting human motive and character. He is a master of every shade and variety of expression. He has a bold and creative imagination. He has painted all characters from kings down to peasants with equal truth.

Context of the Piece.

The passage is taken from *The Merchant of Venice*, Act IV Scene 1. These words are spoken in the Duke's court by Portia disguised as a lawyer to Shylock the Jew.

The Story of "The Merchant of Venice."

Bassanio, a noble but poor Venetian, asks Antonio his friend, a rich merchant, for three thousand ducats to enable him to prosecute fittingly his suit of the rich heiress Portia. Antonio, whose money is all employed in foreign ventures, undertakes to borrow the sum from Shylock, a Jewish usurer, whom he has been accustomed to upbraid for his extortions. Shylock consents to lend the money against a bond by which, in case the sum is not repaid at the appointed day Antonio shall forfeit a pound of flesh. Bassanio prospers in his suit.

He is wedded to Portia, and his friend Gratiano to her maid Nerissa. News comes that Antonio's ships have been wrecked, that the debt has not been repaid when due, and that Shylock claims his pound of flesh. The matter is brought before the Duke for trial. Portia disguises herself as an advocate, and Nerissa as her clerk, and they come to the court to defend Antonio, unknown to their husbands. *Portia appeals to Shylock for mercy (in an eloquent speech which appears in our selections.)* But failing to move him, she admits the validity of the claim, and at the same time warns him that his life is forfeited if he spills one drop of blood, since his bond gives him nothing beyond the flesh. She further argues that Shylock's life is forfeited for having conspired against the life of a Venetian citizen. The Duke grants Shylock his life but gives half his wealth to Antonio, half to the state. Antonio surrenders his claim if Shylock will turn Christian and make over his property on his death to his daughter who has run away with a Christian. Shylock agrees to the terms.

Summary

Mercy is a purely voluntary action. Compulsion has nothing to do with mercy. Like the gentle rain from heaven, mercy showers its beneficence freely on the needy and the distressed. Mercy arises spontaneously in the heart feels for the sufferings of others. It is a double blessing. It blesses him that gives and him that takes. It shines brightest in those mighty persons who choose to show mercy instead of asserting their powers rigorously. It is not a sign of weakness, rather it makes the great greater. It befits a king even better than his crown. The sceptre is the symbol of earthly power, and as such it inspires fear in the hearts of the subject of a King. But Mercy is far above such earthly power. It is an attribute of God Himself. So Kings come nearer to God, that is they partake of divine qualities, when they temper strict justice with mercy. Shylock demands strict justice and dismisses considerations of mercy. Portia therefore asks him whether anybody, if God deal with him according to strict justice, will receive salvation, i. e., God's pardon. Unless God shows mercy, nobody's soul can be saved. We all pray to God for mercy. So we also should be merciful to others.

Critical Comment on Portia's Speech on Mercy

Portia's speech on mercy is a noble expression of the Christian ideal of mercy and forgiveness. This is one of the oft-quoted passages in Shakespeare. Hazlitt remarks, "The speech about Mercy is very well; but there are thousand finer ones in Shakespeare." The lines on Mercy are particularly appealing because they come from the lips of a tender-hearted woman. It has been said that in this pleading for mercy we catch Shakespeare's own voice protesting against the inhuman criminal laws of the time. Dover Wilson remarks on this speech—"The famous hymn in praise of Christian Mercy is a hymn worthy to be set beside that of St Paul in praise of Christian Love. I say 'Christian Mercy' because it is based upon the Lord's Prayer and the Christian doctrine of salvation."

The speech is dramatically appropriate to its context, for it arises naturally out of the unmerciful Shylock's question 'On what compulsion must I?' Portia answers, "The quality of mercy is not strained." The speech reveals Portia's beneficent nature. Portia is full of mercy. She seeks to save Antonio and also Shylock if he shows mercy. Shylock refuses to show mercy to Antonio, and stands on the letter of the law and by the letter of the law Portia defeats Shylock. Portia's speech and Shylock's reaction to it throw much light on their characters.

Notes and Explanations

Lines 1—4. Gist—Mercy is a spontaneous quality, and carries with it double blessings.

Quality—virtue. *Strained*—forced; compelled. *The quality.....strained*—There is no compulsion in mercy, no man or no Law can compel a man to show mercy. [When Antonio confesses the bond, Portia says that for the sake of Antonio's life Shylock must be merciful. Shylock indignantly replies, "What is there to compel me to be merciful?" Then Portia replies that there is no compulsion in mercy.] *Upon the place beneath*—upon the earth. *It droppeth.....beneath*—As there is no compulsion in rain and it flows of itself from a heart that feels for others. Like rain mercy refreshes and benefits. [This simile is found in *Ecclesiasticus*

XXXV, 20: "Mercy is seasonable in the time of application, as clouds rain in the time of drought"] *It is twice blest*—It is a twofold blessing. Mercy makes happy one who shows mercy and the other who receives it.

Explanation.—These lines are taken from the trial-scene of *The Merchant of Venice*. Portia dressed as a Doctor of Law appears in the court to try the case between Antonio and Shylock. She says that Shylock must show mercy otherwise Antonio's life cannot be saved. Shylock replies that there is nothing in law which can compel him to show mercy. Portia then eloquently speaks of the virtue of mercy. She says that there is no question of compulsion in mercy. No man or law can compel a man to show mercy. Mercy can be compared to rain. Like rain, mercy is a natural and spontaneous thing, and like rain it refreshes and benefits things on which it falls. Mercy flows of itself out of the human heart. As rain falls gently upon whatever place it likes, so a man can show mercy to whatever object he likes. Besides, rain refreshes the parched up earth, so mercy soothes the hearts of those who received it. Mercy carries with it double blessings, because it makes happy both the giver and the recipient of it. The man who receives mercy is happy because he is relieved of his sufferings. And the man who shows mercy is happy because he has done good to others: he enjoys a sort of divine self-satisfaction.

Lines 5—10. Gist—Mercy shines best in the hearts of the greatest men. Mercy is superior to the earthly power exercised by the King.

'Tis mightiest in the mightiest—Mercy is the greatest virtue in the greatest men. *Becomes*—adorns. *The throned monarch*—the King on his throne. *It becomes.....crown*—Mercy makes the King more worthy of love and respect than crown.

Cf. "Not the King's crown nor the deputed sword.

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Become them with one half so good a grace.

As mercy does" (*Measure for Measure*).

Sceptre—the staff with the King carries as the symbol of his authority. *Temporal*—earthly material, as opposed to

'heavenly.' *His sceptre.....power*—The King's sceptre is the emblem or outward sign of his worldly power. *Attribute*—essential characteristic. This is in apposition to 'temporal power,' not to 'sceptre.' *Awe and Majesty*—awe-inspiring majesty; dignity of the King which inspires fear in the minds of the subjects. *Attribute.....majesty*—earthly power which is the essential characteristic of the King's majesty which inspires fear in the minds of subjects. *Wherein.....Kings*—upon which depends the fear in which a King is generally held. 'Wherein refers to 'temporal power.' *Sceptred swaj*—earthly power which is symbolised by the sceptre. *Mercy is.....say*—Mercy is far above earthly power. It does not inspire awe and fear; it inspires love and respect.

Explanation.—While appealing to Shylock for showing mercy, Portia points out that mercy is superior to earthly power. Portia says that the glory of mercy shines best in persons who have the greatest power. Mercy wins over the hearts of men while earthly power only terrifies them. Mercy is the greatest quality even in the most powerful man. People love and respect the King more for his merciful heart than for his crown. In a King mercy is a possession nobler than for crown he wears. The king possesses earthly power, and the staff he holds in his hand is an emblem of his earthly power. This earthly power is the essential characteristic of awe-inspiring majesty and it makes Kings feared and dreaded by people. But mercy is a far higher thing than the earthly power exercised by Kings. Mercy inspires love and respect, while earthly power inspires only awe and fear.

Lines 11—14. Gist—Mercy makes an earthly power divine.

It is enthroned..... Kings—Mercy has its seat in the heart of Kings. *It is an attribute to God himself*—it is an essential quality of god, i. e., it is a divine quality. *And earthly..... God's*—Earthly power most resembles divine power. *Seasons—tempers.* *When mercyjustice*—when mercy softens justice.

Explanation.—Portia describes mercy as a divine quality. Mercy is nobler than earthly power, Mercy comes from the

hearts of Kings, while power depends on the strength of arms, Mercy is an essential quality of God, so a King becomes most like God when he deals out justice not harshly but mercifully. God is both just and merciful. He punishes sinners and at the same time shows mercy to them. So the King who rules his people justly but also mercifully, is most like God.

Lines 15—19. Gist—If we want mercy from God, we should show mercy to our fellow creatures.

Jew—Shylock. *Though justice be thy plea*—though it is justice you demand. *In the course of justice*—If God had judged us with strict justice and had not tempered justice with mercy. *Salvation*—deliverance from sin and its consequences, and admission to heaven. *In the course..... salvation*—we are all sinners and not one of us could be saved if God judged our sins with strict justice and did not temper justice with mercy. *We do pray for mercy*—we all pray to God for mercy, not for justice. *That same prayer*—The Lord's prayer is referred to. *Render*—give back; return. *That same.....mercy*—we pray to God for mercy. In order that we may expect mercy from God, we should be merciful to our fellow men.

Explanation.—*Therefore.....mercy*. In these lines Portia tries to impress upon Shylock the need of showing mercy to Antonio. Shylock demands strict justice. So Portia asks him to remember that if God should deal with men with strict justice, none of them would be delivered from sin and admitted to heaven, for all men are more or less sinners. All men therefore, pray to God for mercy not for justice. Again, if men want to have God's mercy and forgiveness, they must themselves be merciful and forgiving to their fellow-creatures.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. 1. Give the context of the speech on Mercy.

Ans. See introduction

Q. 2. Give a summary of the speech.

Ans. See summary.

Q. 3. Write a critical comment on the speech.

Ans. See 'Critical Comment'

Q. 4. Explain;

- (a) It dropped.....takes
- (b) 'Tis mightiest.....sceptred away.
- (c) It is enthroned.....justice.
- (d) We do pray.....mercy.

Ans. See Notes.

THE NOBLE NATURE

A Note on the Author

Ben Jonson (1572—1637) was born and educated in Westminster. He was for a time in the business of his step-father, a brick-layer. He worked for Henslowe's company as player and play-wright. He killed a fellow-actor in a duel but escaped death by benefit of clergy. He became a Roman Catholic. He counted Shakespeare among his friends. He was the author of some famous comedies such as *'Everyman in his humour.'* *'Everyman out of his humour.'* As a man he was arrogant and quarrelsome, but fearless, warm-hearted and honest. The estimate of him formed by his contemporaries is summed up in the inscription of one of these upon his tomb. 'O rare Ben Jonson.'

Title of the Poem.

The main idea of the poem is indicated by the title 'The Noble Nature.' The idea of the poem is that the noble nature of man can manifest itself in a short space. Nobility of character can shine forth in all its beauty even in a thing of little compass. Life may be 'perfect' or 'noble' in short measures. A lily is an emblem of 'noble nature,' while an oak is an emblem of worthless life. 'Noble nature' or moral development is superior to physical development. Perfection of the moral nature of man has nothing to do with the development of his body.

Summary

Mere physical development does not constitute the real greatness of man. The oak tree may stand for long three hundred years, but at last it falls down dead, it is reduced to a dry, leafless and withered piece of wood. On the other

hand, life is an ephemeral flower, but though it withers at night, it shines in all its beauty during the day time. The lily is an emblem of noble life. The example of the lily proves that man can display the beauty of noble life even in a short space of time.

Parallel Ideas

- (1) "Sound, Sound the clarion blow the fife,
And to the sensual world proclaim,
One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name."
—Scott.
- (2) "Life's more than breath and the quick round of blood.
It is a great spirit and a busy heart.
The coward and the small in soul scarce do live.
One generous feeling one great thought, one deed
Of Good, ere night, would make life longer seem
Than if each year might number a thousand days.
We live in deeds, not years, in thoughts, not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart throbs. He most lives
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best."

Notes and Explanations

It is not growing.....be—the prose order would be; It is not growing in bulk like a tree that makes men better. The sense is this : Mere Physical growth does not make men great. The greatness of man consists not in the development of mind and intellect. Or *standing.....sere*—The construction would be : It is not standing long for three hundred years like an oak, to fall at last a dry bald and sere log that makes men better. The sense is this: Men do not attain to real greatness by living a long and useless life like that of an oak tree. An oak tree may stand for long three hundred years but at last it falls down as a dry, leafless and withered piece of wood. Similarly, a man may live up to a great age, but he may die leaving a blank record. *Bulk*—size. *Doth make*—makes. *Be*—this is superfluous. *Log*—a piece of wood. *Bald*—leafless. [A bald head is a hairless head] *Sere*—withered; having no sap.

Explanation.—It is not growing.....sere. It is not physical development that makes men really great. An oak tree attains to great proportions, to great size and height. It stands for long three centuries but at last it falls down dead as a dry, leafless and withered piece of wood. The huge form and long life of the oak are of no use to the oak. Similar is the case with man. A man may have a well-developed body. He may live up to a ripe old age, but if he does not do any useful service to the world, nobody will remember him at his death. His life will be as empty of record as a dry log of wood, bare of leaves or devoid of sap.

Lines 5—8. Lily—flower of a bulbous plant, i. e., plant with undeveloped stem and root. *A lily of a day*—the lily which has an ephemeral existence, i. e., which lasts for a day. *Fairer far*—much more beautiful than the oak. *In May*—in the spring season. *Although.....day*—though it droops and withers away at night. *It was.....of light*—The lily plant and the lily flower flourish only in the day light.

Explanation.—The poet contrasts the oak, the type of an old man who has lived a useless life, with the lily which is the type of a short-lived beautiful thing. The oak lives for three hundred years but leaves no permanent impression upon the minds of men; it is reduced to a dry piece of wood. The lily remains blooming for one whole day only, it withers away and perishes at night fall. Though the lily lives for a few hours, it is far more beautiful than the oak. It charms men by its beauty and fragrance. Similarly, a man may live for a short period, but he may, like the lily, impress mankind with his beautiful actions. A man with a short existence may have a more impressive career than a longlived man with no good record.

Lines 9—10. *In small proportions*—in a short space or compass. *In short measures*—in a short period or space of time. *Perfect*—noble; great.

Explanation.—*In small.....perfect be.* These lines sum up the main idea of the poem. A thing may be most beautiful even though it is small in size. A very small thing may display a superior charm. As for example, the lily is

a humble flower and lives only for one day, yet it spreads its charm during this short period and impresses all men. Similarly, a man may be cut off in the prime of life, yet he may attain perfection or lead a noble ideal life in that short space of time. Longevity is not required for the attainment of perfection.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. 1. Explain the title 'The Noble Nature,' and indicate the central thought of the poem.

Ans. See Title.

Q. 2. Give a summary of the lines.

Ans. See Summary

Q. 3. Explain:—

(a) A lily.....of light

(b) In small.....perfect be.

Ans. See Notes.

ON HIS BEING ARRIVED TO THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE

A Note on the Poet

John Milton (1608—1674) was born in London and educated at Cambridge. He took his M. A. degree in 1632. While at college he conceived a lofty view of the poet's calling and believed in his future destiny at the great epic poet of England. For six years (1632—8) Milton lived at Horton where he prepared himself for the high vocation of the poet. *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, *Comus*, *Lycidas* were the first fruits of his genius. The second period of Milton's life finds him mainly a politician and pamphleteer. He became an ardent partisan on the side of Parliament against the autocrat King Charles I. He fought for freedom, and wrote a number of pamphlets in defence of liberty in politics, liberty in religion and liberty in matters of marriage. As a result of the ever straining of his eyes he became totally blind in 1652. When the common wealth was overthrown, Milton fell on evil days. Poor, blind and persecuted he returned to Poetry. The third period of his life bore the richest poetic

fruit. It was at this time that he wrote his famous epics—*Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained* and his drama *Samson Agonistes*.

Milton is one of the most learned of English poets. He had a high conception of the greatness of the poet's task, a firm faith in the moral basis of all lofty literary effort. He looked for poetic inspiration to "that eternal spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge". He possessed a grandeur and sublimity of imagination. He had a faultless perfection of rhythm and cadence.

Milton as a Sonnet Writer

Milton followed the Italian poet Petrarch in the form of the sonnet.

A sonnet is a stanza of 14 lines of five feet each (Iambic Pentameter). It is divided into two parts—the Octave (i. e. the first 8 lines) and the Sestet (i. e., the next 6 lines). The Octave is made up of two quatrains (stanzas of 4 lines) containing only two rhymes—*abba abba*. The Sestet may have two or three rhymes—*cd, cd, cd* or *cde, cde*. The sonnet expresses one thought or emotion. The emotion should be suggested in the Octave and completed in the Sestet.

Milton's sonnets may be divided into four classes—(1) Controversial (2) Relating to women (3) Personal. (4) Political. They are all full of dignity and strength, being the direct expression of some real emotion. They are always straightforward, majestic and impassioned, justifying Wordsworth's lines—"In his hands the thing became a trumpet whence he blew soul-animating strains". But the finest of all are the personal sonnets. These, according to Stopford A. Brooke, have great and solemn beauty, that belongs to the revelation of a great spirit.

Date of Composition of the Sonnet.

The Sonnet "On his being arrived to the age of twenty-three" was written in 1632, the year in which Milton took his M. A. degree.

Summary

Milton regrets that he has reached, rather completed his twenty-third year without being in the least aware of the

fact, but he has not given any earnest of his future literary achievements. His looks might give a false impression of his actual age. He is near manhood, but he has not attained physical development. His mental development is even less than his physical development. He is very unlike those who are fortunate in their precocity. But he does not care for his deficiency in mental powers. His firm faith in the dispensation of God tells him that his intellectual development will be exactly commensurate with the lot which has been marked out for him by God. It does not matter whether he has been destined by God for something high or low. He will calmly submit to any lot. But what matters for him most is whether God grants him the power to use his gifts as best as he can as though under the direct supervision of the great Task master God to whom every being is responsible for the performance of his allotted task.

Critical Note.

Milton conceived a lofty view of the poet's vocation. In his sonnet "On his being arrived to the Age of Twenty-three" he has clearly emphasised his future vocation. He considered the poet's vocation to be a god-appointed task. The dominating idea of Milton's life was his resolve to use his gifts for the glory of god, and to achieve this object by writing a great poem. He feels an immense responsibility to do something worthy. This idea is plainly revealed in this personal sonnet of Milton. We may compare this sonnet with its quiet self-confidence, its resolved humility, its aspiration to perform the great Task-master's work, with the sonnet written twenty years after, on his blindness, in which, depressed by his blindness, the poet thinks how little has been and may now be done.

Notes and Explanations

Lines 1—8. Gist—Milton regrets that he has passed his twenty-third year without his knowing it, and that he has not given any sign of his inward fitness. He has not had timely physical and mental development.

Subtle thief—Time is so called because youth passes away imperceptibly, its approach is insidious like that of a thief. *Subtle*—cunning. *Stolen*—the word implies that the twenty-

third year has been completed; not that it had begun. *Wing*—the word suggests that time has been compared to a bird; hence the metaphor in the line is a mixed one. *Hasting days*—days which are quickly passing away. *With full career*—at top speed. The word 'career' originally meant 'a race.' 'course' but now means 'swift motion.'

My late spring—(1). My youth has come rather late, because I have not sufficient physical and mental development. 'Spring' generally stands for the stage of youth as 'winter' for 'old age'

(2) My youth which has arrived lately i. e. just arrived,

Bud—promise of future greatness. The bud is the promise of the future blossom. *Blossom*—flower which has bloomed. This stands for present greatness, literary excellence attained by Milton. *But my late.....shew'th*—Milton means to say that the spring of his life, that is, youth has come late because he has not attained proper physical and mental development. He has given up indications of his present or future greatness. He has not produced any remarkable literary works which may prove him to be a great poet in the making. *Semblance*—appearance. *Might deceive the truth*—may belie the fact that he has almost attained to manhood. The reference is to the fact that Milton had the reputation of having been in his youth eminently beautiful so as to be called the lady of the college. In his 'Second Defence' Milton himself writes: "Though I am more than forty years old, there is scarcely anyone to whom I do not appear ten years younger than I am." *Deceive*—disguise; hide. *That I.....near*—that I have almost passed the period of youth. *Inward ripeness*—maturity of mind, mental development. *That some.....endu'th*—that endows some persons who are 'timely-happy.' *Timely-happy*—those who are precocious, fortunate with regard to time. *Doth much less appear*—is much less evident. *Endu'th*—clothes, invests, confers upon. *And inward.....endu'th*—Milton means to say that though he has passed his youth, his mind has developed much less than that of other young men who are fortunate enough to attain timely development of their intellect.

Explanation.—Milton is surprised to find that he has imperceptibly completed his twenty-third year. Time like a

cunning thief has carried away his twenty-three years without letting him know of it. His days have been passing away so quickly that he has not been able to detect their flight. The 'spring' of Milton's life has come late, that is, he has not attained sufficient physical and mental development. In spring many flowers bud and blossom; but in Milton's spring there are no buds or blossoms, that is, Milton has given no signs of future or present greatness. Milton has not produced any remarkable work at present, which might give an earnest of his future greatness as poet. His outward appearance belies his real age. Outwardly he looks much younger than he really is. He has not had sufficient physical development. Not only his body but his mind also has not been properly developed. There are certain persons of precocious nature, who have developed their mental powers too early. Milton is not like those fortunate people.

Lines 9—14. Gist—Milton does not repine at his slow, physical and mental development, for he knows that it will be strictly in proportion to the lot ordained for him by God.

Yet it.....slow—it does not matter whether his physical and mental development has been early or late. *In strictest measure*—exactly. *Even to*—equal to; proportioned to *Lot*—position, rank, station in life. *Mean*—humble. *Toward.....Heaven*—towards which (lot) Time and the will of Heaven lead me. *Shall be*—this is emphatic "We have here Milton's deliberate statement of his intention to become a great poet" (Bell.) *It shall.....Heaven*—Milton does not care whether his mental development is quick or late in coming, it may be little or much but it must always be strictly in proportion to the destiny high or low for which God intends him.

All is—This has been variously explained:—

(1) All that concerns me is.

"All that concerns me, that is, my first consideration is to use my powers as under one who constantly sees and judges my work" (Bell.)

"All depends upon my employing it ('inward ripeness') as feeling myself to be under the eyes of my great Taskmaster"
—*Keightly.*

(2) Milton says that his powers not merely *shall be* proportionate to the Heaven-appointed lot (as he has said in a previous line,) but they are already so, only if he receives the favour or mercy of God to use his powers as one who is conscious that God always superintends his work. "After saying what his powers shall be Milton corrects himself and says that they are already adequate to God's need of him if he has grace to use them as they should be used."

(3) Milton does not complain on the score of his powers. All is, that is, everything exists—his powers are enough. What is important for him is to use his powers as though under the watchful eyes of providence.

If I have grace etc.—If I receive the favour of God in making use of my powers. *Taskmaster*—God who calls men to their various stations in life in which they have their appointed tasks. There is a reference to the parable of the vineyard. The word literally means one who sets tasks to others and superintends the carrying out of work. *As evereye*—As a servant works best if the master keeps a constant watch upon him, so Milton believes he would use his powers best if he feels that God is superintending his work.

Explanation—*Yet be it.....taskmaster's eye*—Milton has not attained sufficient mental development, though he has completed his twenty-third year. But he does not complain. He has a deep faith in God, and he resigns himself to His will. His mental maturity may come early or late, but he knows that it shall exactly commensurate with the lot which has been decreed by the will of God. It may be a high or low position which God has ordained for him, and he submits to the destiny marked out for him by God, with a calm confidence. He does not care for early or late development of mind. He is contented with whatever mental powers God may have bestowed upon him. All that he cares for is whether he can use his powers as one who is conscious of the direct supervision of God. As a servant

works best if he knows that his master watches him, so Milton would use his powers best if he feels that God is superintending his actions.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. 1. What do you learn about Milton from this sonnet?

Ans. See Summary. Note the points :—

(a) Milton looked younger than his years.

(b) He was not a precocious spirit.

(c) He aspired to devote his intellectual powers to the service of God. He had a religious soul.

Q. 2. Explain the metrical structure of the Sonnet.

Ans. See 'Milton as a Sonneteer.'

Q. 3. Explain:—Yet be it.....taskmaster's eye.

Ans. See Notes.

THE CLOUD

A Note on the Author.

P. B. Shelley (1792--1822) was born in Sussex. He was sent to Eton at twelve. He was then a boy of studious and meditative habits. He was interested in Chemistry and Physics. He went up to Oxford in 1810. He was expelled for writing a pamphlet entitled *The Necessity of Atheism*. He felt a romantic attachment for Harriet and married her. He went to Ireland in 1811 with a view to redress the wrongs of that country. He returned to London and there met Godwin. He felt a new attachment for Mary Godwin, Godwin's daughter and this led to his estrangement from Harriet. He left for Switzerland with Mary. Harriet committed suicide, so Shelley returned to England. In 1818 Shelley and Mary left England and chose Italy as their home. Shelley's best lyrics and dramas were composed under the inspiration of the Italian scenery and art. He toured through various places of Italy. In June, 1822 Shelley heard of the arrival of Leigh Hunt at Genoa, whence the latter proceeded to Leghorn. Shelley and his friend Williams at once set sail for Leghorn. On their way back Shelley

and Williams were drowned in a sudden storm on July 8, 1822.

Shelley's Chief Works

Queen Mab, Revolt of Islam, Prometheus Unbound, Epipsy-chidion, Adonais. Lyrical Pieces—e.g., Ode to the West Wind, The Sensitive Plant, The Cloud.

Shelley as a Poet

Freedom and love were the two favourite notes of Shelley's Muse. "Shelley remains above all a lyric poet, the greatest that England or perhaps modern Europe has produced." 'Shelley's lyricism is incomparable. Everything with Shelley is the occasion for a musical stir' (casamian). Shelley's lyrics have a wide range. Some of them are purely descriptive pieces. Others are play of fancy. To this class belong *The Cloud* and *The Skylark*, in which there is a splendid succession of images in melodious language. Shelley's lyrics have an ease of the versification and a variety of form.

Summary

In the first stanza the cloud is represented as a regenerating power in Nature. It generates rain which refreshes the flowers and gives them their very life. At noon the cloud creates light shade for the leaves which sleep quietly. It also causes bright dew drops to fall on buds and awaken them when they are lulled to sleep on the breast of mother Earth. Then again the cloud brings forth hail which strikes hard against the ground and whitens the green plains with snow.

In the second stanza the cloud is represented as the destroying power of Nature. The cloud causes blasts which rend the snow on the mountains. The masses of snow roll down the sides of mountains and crush the pine trees which tremble with fear. In the midst of this turmoil of Nature, the cloud hangs on the sides of mountains in her mysterious bower in the sky. Lightning, the pilot of the cloud, sits on the towers of this lower while the 'terrific thunder is chained' in a cavern below, from which like a giant, it sends forth 'its roar' at intervals, as it struggles to itself free. Lightning is in love with the beautiful spirits of the Earth and Water

and conducts the lady cloud always over earth and ocean. After some time lightning dissolves in rains, but the cloud always enjoys the genial warmth of the sky.

In the third stanza the cloud is represented as the beautifying principle in Nature. Early in the morning the sun rises in his splendour. the golden beams of the sun fall on the clouds that have gathered round the bright disc of the sun and seem to dance and quiver there like the bright wings of the eagle when it rests on a crag which is being violently shaken by the earthquake. At sunset when a soft tender breeze blows from the sea, and the red curtain of evening falls upon the earth, the cloud, bright with the glory of the sunset, rests upon the evening sky, still and motionless like a brooding dove. At night, again, when the moon rises and the stars gleam, the sky is strewn over with patches of fleecy clouds, and the whole host of stars, moon and clouds are reflected upon the still glassy surface of rivers, lakes and seas below.

Early in the morning the cloud gathers round the throne of the Sun-god and at night she gathers round the moon and forms the pearl-white halo of glory round her. When the hurricane comes, the whole sky is overcast with dark masses of clouds, which stretch forth endlessly and look like a bridge over the sea, joining cape to cape. Then when the storms are over, bright drops of rain fall from the clouds and intercept the sun's rays thus producing the most beautiful phenomenon of Nature—the million-coloured rainbow, whose soft colours are woven by the sun 'while the moist earth is laughing below.'

In the concluding stanza the poet dwells upon the indestructibility of the cloud. The cloud is the daughter of the Earth and Water and she is the nursling of the sky. Hers is an everlasting life, she changes but cannot die. And when after the storms are over and the whole sky seems to be smiling, and the winds and beams build up in the sky a blue dome of air, the cenotaph of the cloud as it were, the cloud laughs at this and suddenly rising out of the earth and sea and destroys this work of the winds and sunbeams and the sky is again overcast with masses of clouds,

Substance

The cloud discharges drops of rain which awaken and refresh the flowers. It also gives genial shade to the leaves at noon. In the morning it causes the dew drops to fall and make the buds full-blown. It also causes hails to cover the ground with snow, but this snow again is dissolved in rains,

The cloud sends blasts which rend asunder the snow deposited on the tops of mountains, which rolls down crushing the pine trees. The cloud also brings storms and thunder accompanied with lightning. Lightning attracts all things of the earth and ocean. When the lightning disappears in rains, the cloud rests in the blue sky.

In the morning the golden rays of the sun falling upon the cloud make a beautiful phenomenon. In the evening when gentle breeze blows from the sea, the cloud rests motionless on the sky. Then at night the stars and the moon are reflected through the gaps of fleecy clouds upon the waters below.

The cloud gathers round the bright disc of the rising sun, and at night forms a halo round the moon. The whole sky is overcast with clouds when the hurricane blows. When the storms are over, the rain drops intercept the rays of the sun and thus produce the most beautiful phenomenon of Nature—the rainbow.

The cloud is made of vapour rising from earth and water and this vapour passes to the sky. The cloud passes through the pores of the ocean and shores in the form of rain-drops. The cloud may change its form but it can never be destroyed. Though the sky may appear to be bare of cloud, the cloud may suddenly rise and overcast the whole sky.

Critical Appreciation

The Cloud illustrates some of the ruling characteristics of Shelley's poetry—

(a) Tendency to weave scientific facts into the texture of poetry. In 'The Cloud' the poet has expressed the scientific and physical facts and phenomena—how the cloud is formed by the rise of vapour from the waters, how clouds cause the

fall of snow, how clouds are accompanied with storm, thunder and lightning, how clouds form the rainbow, and so on. He has also mentioned the fact of the diurnal rotation of the earth round the sun—"As she dances about the sun." He has beautifully expressed the scientific principle of Conservation of Matter in the cloud-myth:

"I change, but I cannot die." With the poet's fancy Shelley has represented Lightning as the lover of earth and water to express the Principle of Gravitation.

(b) *Myth-Making Power.* Shelley's gift of personifying and humanising the forces of nature, makes him unique among English Poets. He shares this myth-making power, with ancient Greek poets. The cloud daughter of Earth and Water has been represented as a lady of the medieval age, as the Roman General and so on. It is the cloud which speaks in the poem. The poem is a sort of monologue. In a beautiful myth the poet has represented the cloud as laughing at her own cenotaph and unbuilding the work of her friends 'the winds and the sunbeams.'

(c) *Nature.* Shelley is fond of dwelling upon the shifting scenes of nature, like the cloud, storms, sunset. He has conceived the objects of Nature as having individual spirits. Lightning is imagined as having been in love with the spirits that dwell in the sea, mountain, plains etc. This is called Shelley's *Pantheistic* conception of Nature. Shelley has attributed the feelings of sentient beings to inanimate objects.

(d) *Wealth of Imagery.* Shelley's poetry is peculiarly rich in imagery. It is a characteristic of Shelley to present the same object of Nature under a variety of images. Thus the cloud has been presented as a bird, as a winnower of hails, as a lady of the Middle Ages sitting on her bowers, as a brooding dove, as a victorious Roman general, as the daughter of Earth and Water and so on. In a splendid image Shelley has pictured the sun with golden rays leaping on the back of the sailing cloud as the Eagle with 'burning plumes' sitting on a mountain shaken by the earthquake. The moon has been fancied as 'an orb'd maiden with white fire laden.'

(e) *East of Versification.* Shelley's lyrics have generally an easy, spontaneous and melodious flow of verses. 'The same quality we find in 'The Cloud.'

Notes and Explanations

Stanza 1

I bring.....flowers—The cloud speaks throughout the poem. Here the poet refers to the fact that flowers cannot grow unless they are watered. The rain-drops falling from the clouds provide nourishment to the flowers.' The flowers are, as it were, in a parched state, and are thirsting for rain-drops. The cloud brings rain to allay the thirst of the flowers. *Thirsting flowers*—Shelley attributes human feelings to inanimate objects. He believes that Nature is alive and capable of feeling pleasure and pain like human beings. The flowers are thirsting for rain and the cloud satisfies their thirst. *From the seas and the streams*—Shelley in the mouth of the cloud puts a well-known fact of science. By the power of the sun's rays the waters of rivers and seas are converted into water-vapour and ultimately into clouds which, as soon as they come in contact with cooler currents of air, are dissolved into rain. *I bear light.....dreams*—At noon when everything is calm and quiet, leaves seem to enjoy a sweet sleep, and at such a time it is the cloud that mercifully spreads a gentle shadow over their heads, thus enable them to sleep and dream pleasantly. The plain fact is that at noon clouds pass and repass; sometimes they obscure the sun so that a gentle shade is caused. Shelley poetically says that such shades are caused by the clouds as they feel for the poor leaves who require slumber at noon. The whole thing is a beautiful poetic fancy. *Light*—soft; gentle. *Noon-day dreams*—The poet here also attributes human feelings to the inanimate objects. *From my wings... ..dews*—The cloud is compared here to a bird, which shakes from its wings bright dew-drops. The plain meaning is that the dew comes from the clouds. *Waken*—rouse from the sleep. *From my.....buds everyone*—The bright dew drops fall on the petals of sweet young flowers and rouse them from their sleep, i. e., make them full-blown. *Rocked*—moved forward and backward and thus lulled to sleep. *Mother's breast*—Earth is called the mother of flowers, for

the flowers have sprung into existence out of it. [Some commentators take 'mother' to mean the flower-plant or even big flowers which are dancing in the sun's rays.] *She*—i. e., Earth. *She dances about the sun*—moves round the sun. The poet refers to the Earth's revolution round the Sun. *Wield* hold; sway. *Flail*—a threshing instrument. *Lashing hail*—the hail sending flakes of snow which strike hard against the ground on which they fall. *I wield.....hail*—I work the threshing instrument that sends down strong showers of hail. In other words, the flakes of snow scattered by the hail, strike the ground like a threshing instrument. But the hails themselves are the work of the cloud. The cloud is the cause of hails. *Whiten.....under*—cover with white snow the plains overgrown with green grass. *And then again.....thunder*—the idea is that the hail storm is followed by a power of rain, *Laugh*—the cloud is made bright by lightning, so the poet says that it laughs when it passes with the noise of thunder. *Thunder*—thunderstorms.

Explanation.—Shelley puts his own thoughts about the cloud into the mouth of the cloud. The cloud is formed of water-vapours rising from the seas and rivers. The rain drops which fall from the clouds refresh the flowers which are as it were, parched up with thirst. At noon when the leaves remain motionless and calm, as though enjoying a sweet dream, the cloud casts a genial shade upon them. The dew drops which fall from the cloud (as from the wings of a bird) cause the buds of flowers to blossom. The flowers are moved forward and backward on the breast of mother Earth who moves round the sun. The cloud is again represented as working a threshing instrument. As a winnower threshes out the grain, so the cloud is imagined at threshing out the hails. The cloud is the cause of hails. The hails make the grassy plains look white. The hailstorm is followed by a shower of rain. It thunders and the cloud which is now discharged of its watery contents looks very bright.

Stanza 2

Sift—scatter; separate; divide. *Snow on the mountains below*—the snow that has been deposited on the tops of the

mountains. *Below*—below the cloud. *Great pines*—lofty pine trees growing on the sides of the mountains. *Aghast*—terrified. *Groan aghast*—produce a cracking sound. The snow is parted by blasts and as it rushes upon the tall pine trees, a cracking sound is produced like the groan of a man crushed under the weight of a heavy burden. *'Tis my pillow*—the white mass of snow serves as my pillow. *Blast*—thunder-storms. *While I sleep.....blast*—the cloud is represented as resting its head upon the mass of snow, suspended by the blasts. *Sublime*—used in the Latin sense of 'up-lifted'. *Towers*—tops. *Skycy bowers*—dwelling places in the sky. *Bowers*—the cloud is represented as a lady sitting in her bower, and the bower in this case is the upper region of the sky. Just as a high-born lady sits in her apartment in the castle, so the cloud is sitting in the bower of the sky. This is a beautiful poet as sitting on the top of the 'bowers' of the cloud to guide or conduct her whenever she may desire to go. *Cavern*—hollow. *Under*—(1) in the sky but under bowers of the cloud i. e., in the regions of the sky (for the sound of thunder seems always to come from a near region). (2) Under the earth (for the sound of thunder seems to come from the hollow depths of the earth) *Fettered*—bound in chains. *Struggles*—to set itself from the dungeon where it lies in an imprisoned state. *Howls*—rumbles. sends forth deep and hollow sounds. *At fits*—at irregular intervals. *In a cavern.....hits*—These lines are founded upon a passage in Virgil's *Æneid*—Book 1. "As the goddess (Juno) in her burning soul still pondered thoughts like these, she reached *Æolia*, the home of storms, a region big with blustering blasts. Here King *Æolus* in his dreary cavern-restrains under his command the *struggling winds* are the *roaring storms* and curbs them with the bonds of his prison-house. Chafing thereat, his subjects, whilst the mountain murmurs mightily, rage about the bars of the dungeon on his lofty citadel sits *Æolus*, his sceptre in his hand, he tames their passions and controls their rage."

The plain meaning is that the cloud is accompanied by thunder. The rumblings of thunder seem to come from the very depths of the earth. Thunder has been kept in chains because of its destructive powers; if it were set free, the whole would be destroyed. *With gentle motion*—softly and

gently. *Pilot*—Lightning which shows the path of the cloud and is represented by the poet as its guide. *Lured*—attracted. 'Lured' may go either with 'lightning' or with 'cloud,' more probably with the former. Lightning attracts the things of the earth and the sea. The poet fancies the Lightning is in love with the beautiful spirits of the sea. *Genii*—spirits [Shelley considered all nature to be peopled with beautiful spirits] *Purple sea*—The sea is blue, but it becomes purple-coloured when the lightning flashes across its blue surface. *Rills*—small streams. *Wherever he dreams etc.*—The construction is: Lightning is guiding the cloud under mountain or stream etc., in fact, wherever he dreams (i. e., fancies) the spirit he loves remains. *Dream*—fancies. *The Spirit*—the beautiful spirit of nature with whom Lightning is in love [This illustrates Shelley's *Pantheism*. Shelley believed that this world is permeated by a spirit] *Bask*—got dry and warm. *He*—lightning. *Dissolving in rains*—after some time lightning disappears in rains.

Explanation.—The cloud sends forth blasts and thunderstorms, which part the snow deposited on the tops of mountains. This mass of snow, being thus parted, rolls down in the shape of an avalanche, and crushes in its passage the pine trees which have grown on the sides of mountains. The pine trees being crushed by the weight of snow produce a cracking sound like the groan of a man oppressed under a heavy burden. Again, the cloud is represented by the poet as resting its head upon the pillow.

The plain meaning is that under the force of the blasts the cloud is driven high up in the air till it touches the mass of snow and rests there. But how can it rest there unless it is supported by something? It is the blasts that support it. Hence the poet imagines that the cloud is sleeping in the arms of the blasts, with its head resting upon the mass of snow which serves the purpose of a pillow.

Overheard in the topmost parts of the sky is seen lightning. Lightning guides the cloud. The cloud has been likened to a lady sitting in her bowers in the sky. The lightning is the pilot of the cloud as it seems to light up its passage by sending forth flash after flash. Thunder has been represented as a giant. The giant thunder has been

kept as a prisoner in the hollow depths of the earth, for if it would be let loose, it might destroy the whole world. Its rumblings are heard from below the earth. Lightning drives the cloud across the sky over earth and ocean, to which he is attracted by the spirits that live there. The poet fancies the Lightning is in love with the spirits of the mountains, hills, lakes, plains etc. The plain fact is that lightning attracts all things of the earth. The lightning gradually disappears as the rain sets in, but the cloud lies all the while under the warmth of the blue sky above.

Stanza 3

Sanguine—red; having the colour of blood. *Meteor eyes*—bright, dazzling eye like the shooting stars (meteors.) The eyes of the sun would refer to its bright rays. *Burning plumes*—bright, fiery feathers. The sun scattering golden rays has been compared to a bird—the eagle with golden wings. *Outspread*—spread out. *Sailing rack*—thin, broken patches of clouds sailing across the sky. *Leaps.....rack*—The golden rays of the sun fall on the patches of clouds sailing across the sky and seem to dance there. *The morning star*—Venus which rises just before dawn. *Shines dead*—grows dimmer, loses its lustre in the morning and becomes pale, owing to the brighter light of the sun. *As*—just as. *Jag*—projecting point. *Crag*—rough steep rock. *Rocks*—moves: shakes. *Swings*—shakes. *Alit*—having alighted on come down. *Its golden wings*—the bright plumes of the eagle. *Breathe*—The sea sends forth a soft, gentle breeze which the poet likens to the soft accents of a lover. *Note*—how the word beautifully suggests the atmosphere of calm. *Lit sea*—the sea lighted up by the golden rays of the setting sun. Sunrise and sunset look at the more splendid on the breast of the sea. *Ardours*—warmth of passion or feeling. *Crimson pall*—red covering. In the evening the sky becomes red. Hence the poet thinks that the goddess of evening drops a red curtain over the earth from the sky. *Folded*—closed; spread out. The cloud seems to rest on the face of the sky, it does not sail along the sky. *Airy nest*—cf. 'skyeey bowers' in St. 2. The cloud is compared to a bird enjoying rest in the nest. *Brooding dove*—a dove sitting upon her eggs in

order to hatch them. The cloud seems to rest quietly in sky like a brooding dove. The dove is noted for its gentleness and is the type of modesty and love,

Explanation.—*The Sanguine.....wings.* Shelley describes the cloud as it appears at sunrise. The sun rises early in the morning with his deep red rays, his eyes blood-red and dazzling like shooting stars, and the golden rays of the sun fall and dance upon small patches of clouds sailing across the sky, as Venus, the morning star, pales before the intense light of the sun. The golden rays of the sun look like the golden wings of an eagle that seems to dance as it perches upon the projection of some rock which is being violently shaken by the force of an earthquake.

Note the points of comparison:—The sun=the eagle. The golden rays of the sun=bright feathers of the eagle. The eyes of the sun=the shooting eyes of the eagle. The light of the sun dancing upon the cloud=the feathers of the eagle quivering upon the rock when the rock is shaken by an earthquake.

Explanation.—*And when sunset.....dove.*

The poet describes the cloud as it appears at sunset.

In the evening a soft, tender breeze rises out of the sea and begins to blow over the earth bringing to our mind feelings of love and peace. (The poet likens the soft gentle breeze which the sea sends forth, to the soft whispers of a lover.) Just as a lover overpowered with emotions, whispers gentle accents of love and peace to her beloved, and the words seem to come out of the deep bottom of the heart, so the sea sends forth from her very heart, as it were, a soft, tender breeze [This is a beautiful imagery.] In the evening the sky becomes red. It seems that the goddess of evening has dropped a red curtain over the earth from the sky. At this hour the cloud does not sail, it seems to be resting quietly on the face of the sky, like a dove sitting upon her eggs in order to hatch them.

Stanza 4. *That orb'd maiden*—the moon with her silvery orb or disc. The orb may also refer to the halo round the moon. *White fire*—silvery rays of the moon. *With.....laden*—loaded with white fire, i. e., sending forth silvery

beams. The fire refers, to the arrows of Diana, the moon-goddess. *Mortals*—human beings. *Whom mortals*.....*moon*—We human beings call the moon the moon, but to the cloud the moon is the maiden with silvery rays. *Glides glimmering*—silently moves across the sky, emitting a feeble light. *Fleece-like floor*—white thin layers of clouds like the fleece of sheep. *Strewn*—scattered. *Beat*—sound of the foot-step of the moon. Shelley refers here to the pythagorean doctrine of the music of the spheres. According to Pythagoras (an ancient Greek philosopher) the heavenly bodies, i. e., planets etc. are presided over by angels, who as the spheres revolve together, produces sweet music inaudible to mortal ears. So the man also produces a sweet music which is heard only by the angels, and not by the sinful creatures of the earth. *Unseen*—invisible. *Which only*.....*hear*—the music of the spheres is heard only by angels (see notes on 'Beat' above.) *Woof*—web; texture. *May have broken etc.*—The poet fancies that small patches of cloud which move across the sky have been scattered because the tent of the cloud (formed by small patches of cloud) has been broken by the moon in the course of her journey across the sky. *Peep behind her*—peep behind the moon. *Peer*—look closely. *Them*—the stars. *Whirl*—move swiftly. *Flee*—disappear swiftly. *Rent*—breach; opening. *Wind-built tent*—the tent that has been formed by clouds as they were driven together by the force of the winds. *Strips of the sky*—the rivers, lakes, seas look like so many portions of the sky because on them have been reflected the small patches of clouds, the moon and the stars. *Through me*—through the fleecy clouds. *Paved with*—decorated with; strewn with. *And these*—and the stars.

Explanation.—The moon poetically called by Shelley a maiden with a silvery orb, silently moves across the sky over the fleecy clouds. The thin patches of cloud are scattered by the midnight breeze. The poet fancies that the tent of the cloud (formed by the small patches of cloud) have been broken by the moon as she passes through them. The sound of the foot-steps of the moon is heard only by the angles and not by the gross ears of sinful men. The moon throws out glimmering beams upon the clouds.

Through the openings of the patches of clouds the stars peep out. Gradually these openings widen more and more till the whole sky is full of them. Then the stars shine out and the reflection of the cloudlets, stars and the moon falls upon the gentle surfaces of the rivers, lakes and seas, and gives them the appearance of portions of the sky itself. The plain meaning is that the blue sky with its stars, moon and clouds is reflected on the blue surface of the water.

Stanza 5. A burning zone—a red fiery belt. I bind..... zone—When the sun rises, masses of clouds gather round the disc of the sun, and form a glorious belt. The sun is compared to a monarch whose belt is formed by the clouds. *Girdle of pearl*—The halo round the moon, which is formed by clouds, looks like a belt of white pearls, because the moon-beams are silver-white. *The Volcanoes are dim*—The fires in the volcanoes become dim when the sky is overcast with clouds. [Shelley here describes a hurricane by hints and suggestions.] *The stars reel and swim*—When the sky is overcast with clouds which are driven by storm, the stars seem to quiver and move rapidly across the sky. *Reel and swim*—tremble because they are seen through revolving clouds. *Unfurl*—stretch out. *When.....unfurl*—When the banner of the cloud is stretched at its full length by the whirl winds. The plain meaning is:—The whirl winds drive the clouds across the sky, and the whole sky is overcast with dense masses of black clouds. *Whirl winds*—masses of air moving rapidly round and round. *From cape to cape*—joining one cape with another, the cloud stretches from one cape to another, looking like a connecting bridge. *With a bridge-like shape*—looking like a bridge over the sea. *Torrent sea*—the rushing water of the sea; the sea rushing furiously because its surface has been violently agitated by storms. *Sun-beam proof*—not dissolved by the sun beam. The sun's beams cannot penetrate through the dense clouds. *Hang*—am suspended in the sky. *Like a roof.....be*—The clouds form like a roof is supported on pillars. In the case of the cloud, it is the mountains which look like the pillars of the cloud. *The triumphal arch*—This rainbow which looks like an arch raised up in some town to welcome its victorious

general. The allusion is here to the Roman custom of honouring a victorious general who entered the city in a triumphal procession. Just as some victorious Roman general (like Julius Caesar) had to enter the city in a triumphal procession with captives and spoils of war and had to pass through arches erected in his honour, so also the cloud marches victorious through the rainbow with all the powers of the air bound to her chariot. *I march*—Shelley compares the cloud to a victorious general. *Hurricane, fire and snow*—These accompany the cloud in her triumphal march across the sky. *Fire*—refers to lightning, hurricane to 'storms,' snow to hails. *Powers of the air*—The winds of heaven carry the chariot of the cloud like captive kings drawing the chariot of some victorious general, *Chained*—bound. *Chair*—chariot, car of victory. *Million-coloured bow*—the rainbow with its rich variety of colours. There are actually seven colours. 'Million-coloured' is a poetic exaggeration. *Sphere-fire*—the sun; the sphere made of fire. *Its*—of the rainbow.

The sphere... wave—The soft colours of the rainbow were woven by (made of) the light of the sun. Shelley here explains how rainbows are caused. The rainbow is formed when the sun's rays are intercepted by rain-drops (which make the earth moist, as is stated by the poet in the next line.) *Moist earth*—the earth which has been made moist or wet by rain-drops. *Was laughing below*—When the rainbow appears in the sky, the earth seems to be laughing in delight, as the soft sun-beams falling upon the earth, make it extremely beautiful.

Explanation.—*I bind.....columns be.*—Early in the morning when the sun rises, clouds gather round it in the shape of a burning belt, and at night they gather round the moon and form a pearl-white bright belt. When the whirlwinds blow and the sky is overcast with clouds, the fires in the volcanoes become dim and the stars seem to tremble in the sky. The whole sky is covered with masses of clouds floating swiftly across it, and stretching over the rushing waters of the sea, the clouds look like a bridge joining one cape with another. The rays of the sun cannot penetrate through them, and thus unaffected by the sunbeams the

masses of clouds remain in the sky suspended like a roof supported by the mountains which serve as pillars. *The triumphal.....laughing below.* When the storms are almost over, bright rain-drops fall from the clouds and intercepting the sun's rays, they form the glorious rainbow. The rainbow is like the arched gateway erected in honour of a victorious Roman general. The cloud has been compared to a victorious Roman general. The Roman general entered the city in a procession attended by a large retinue, his captives being tied to his chariot. Similarly, when the cloud passed through the rainbow, she was attended by storms, lightning, hails etc., the forces of wind being controlled by her as prisoners. The many coloured rainbow is formed when the sun's rays are intercepted by rain-drops which make the earth moist. When the rainbow appears in the sky, the earth seems to be laughing in delight as the soft sunbeams falling upon the earth makes it extremely beautiful.

Stanza 6. Daughter of earth and water—The cloud is made of water-vapour rising from the earth and water (sea, oceans etc.) under the influence of radiation. *Nursing of the sky*—The sky is the nurse of the cloud, because the cloud is formed and brought up in the sky. *Pores*—minute openings *I change.....die*—The cloud can never be destroyed though it takes many shapes Matter is indestructible. *Stain*—spot. *With never a stain*—The sky regains its deep blue colour after the rains are over. *Pavilion*—canopy, covering, tent. *Is bare*—is free from clouds. *Convex gleams*—thy ray of the sun falling upon the earth obliquely, *Convex*—curved like the outside of circle or sphere. *Blue dome of air*—the blue sky. *Cenotaph*—sepulchral monument to a person whose body has been buried elsewhere. *Caverns of rain*—the earth and the ocean where the rain-drops have fallen. These rain-drops will again be formed into vapours, and lead to the formation of clouds. *From the womb*—the earth and water whose daughter the cloud is. *Tomb*—the earth and the water where the cloud has buried in the shape of rain water. *Arise*—are formed. *Unbuild it*—destroy the blue dome of air by covering the sky again with dense masses of clouds.

Explanation.—I am.....cannot die. The cloud is the daughter of earth and water, because she is formed by the vapours rising from earth and water, i. e. seas, oceans etc. The cloud is nursed by the sky, because she is formed and brought up in the sky. The cloud rises as vapour through the minute openings of the ocean and shores, and again falls as rain and enters the ocean and shores through the minute openings. The cloud may sometimes change its shape as when it is dissolved into rain, but it can never be destroyed.

For after the rain.....again. In the concluding lines of the poem Shelley makes the cloud say that as a power of nature she can never be destroyed. She only changes shape when she is dissolved into rains, but she can never be wholly extinguished. The cloud says that she can never die though at times she seems to be dead. After the rains and storms are over, the sky regains its deep blue colour; the winds begin to blow gently and the sunbeams seem to dance again. There seems to be no trace of cloud in the sky. The winds and sunbeams thinking that the cloud is dead, and will not again appear, build up in the sky a beautiful, blue dome in her memory, as the cloud has been dissolved into rains and buried in the earth below. At the sight of this, the cloud only laughs to himself for she knows that she will appear in the sky all on a sudden (like a child from the mother's womb or like a ghost from its grave and destroy the blue dome of air by covering the sky again with dense masses of cloud.

N. B. Here we have an instance of Shelley's might-making power.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. 1. Give a summary of 'The Cloud.'

Ans. See Summary,

Q. 2. State the bare scientific facts or facts of physical phenomena which have been expressed by Shelley in a highly poetical imagery.

Ans. See 'Substance' and 'Critical Appreciation.'

3. Illustrate Shelley's.

(a) Myth-making Power, (b) Pantheistic view of Nature.

Ans. See under 'Critical Appreciation.'

Q. 4. Explain:—

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----|-----|------------|
| (a) From my wings ... | ... | ... | sun. |
| (b) I wield ... | ... | ... | thunder. |
| (c) Over earth ... | ... | ... | remains. |
| (d) As on the jag ... | ... | ... | dove. |
| (e) When I widen ... | ... | ... | these. |
| (f) The triumphal ... | ... | ... | below. |
| (g) I am ... | ... | ... | cannot die |
| (h) I silently ... | ... | ... | again. |

Ans. See Notes.

THE ETERNAL GOODNESS

A Note on the Author.

John Greenleaf Whittier (1807—1892) was born at Haverhill (America) of Quaker Parents. He began life as a farmer's boy and supported himself while at Haverhill Academy by shoe-making and teaching. His poetical instincts were roused by reading Burns' poetry. He was from early years an industrious writer. He edited various periodicals. He became an ardent abolitionist. He was secretary of the Anti-slavery Society. After 1840 he lived in seclusion near his birth-place. He has always been a popular poet in America owing to the transparent sincerity and nobility of his character. He published many volumes of poems.

Summary

God is eternally good, Physical and moral evils prevail all about the world. In spite of these apparent contradictions and anomalies the poet anchors his faith in the eternal goodness of God. The poet feels strongly confident that God's mercy lies at the bottom of everything whether in life or in death. He does not care to know what strange fate God has reserved for him in future. The poet sincerely believes that

God will give him strength and stimulus to endure the untested sufferings of life. The poet knows that he has nothing to offer to God in return for His infinite kindness, for whatever he would offer to God is God's own gift. The poet entirely relies upon the care and loving protection of God. He firmly believes in God's never-failing mercy. He calmly waits for death. He does not care to know where the Island of the Blessed are; he knows that wherever He might carry him after death, He would extend his love and care there too.

Title of the Poem—The title of the poem indicates its central idea, namely, that man can rely only upon the 'eternal goodness' of God. God's goodness, His love and care never fails. It will always sustain the pious man in all his earthly sufferings.

Critical Notes

This poem bears clear testimony to the sincere and devout character of the poet. Whittier believed in the never-failing mercy and goodness of God. He was an ardent abolitionist. Hence he wrote the line "I see the wrong that round me lies" referring perhaps to the injustice or wrongs done to the slaves. The poem has thus an autobiographical interest.

Notes and Explanations

Stanza. 1. Gist—The whole world suffers the pangs remorse at its sinful deeds.

I see the wrong etc.—The poet finds all about him many evils or sins done by the people of the world. *I feel the guilt within*—The poet himself feels a sense of having done something wrong in the world, or against God. *I hear.....its sin*—The prose order should be:—'I hear the world confess its sin with groans and travail cries.' *Groans*—cries of pain. *Travail*—torture; labour with pain. *Travail cries*—cries of anguish or suffering. *Confess its sin*—acknowledge its guilt; repent of having violated the laws of God. *I hear.....sin*—The poet hears the bitter cries of mental pain, which come from the penitent sinners.

Explanation—The poet is conscious of the sins both within himself and without. The existence of the sin in the

world is proved by the fact that the world is filled with the bitter cries of despair and anguish, proceeding from the repentant sinners. The poet experiences within himself the bitter sense of having done something against the law of God. And he also finds all men of the outside world expressing their sense of guilt through their piteous cries of remorse or penitence.

Stanza 2. Gist—In spite of the many ills of life the poet pins his faith upon the essential goodness of God.

Maddening—which drives men into madness. *Maze of things*—confusion and puzzling contradictions of the world. The idea is this: The world appears to be full of evils or sins appears to be cruel and unjust.

Stanza 3. Gist—The poet is firmly convinced of the mercy of God in life and death.

Marvel—wonderful thing; miracle. *I know.....*
surprise—The poet says that he does not know what strange or wonderful purpose God may have for his actions. *Assured*—convinced. *Underlies*—lies at the bottom of. *Life and death*—object of 'underlies.' *Assured.....underlies*—The poet knows it for certain that God is always merciful to man, whether in life or in death.

Explanation—The poet here says that with limited powers of understanding he cannot understand the real purpose of God's actions. God's dispensations are really mysterious. It may be that God intends something in future, which we may not have expected at all. Whatever may be the purpose of God, the poet feels confident that God does. The poet finds it difficult to explain the existence of evils in the world created by the good God, just as in a maze or labyrinth (a net work of intricate paths) one finds it difficult to get out.

Tossed—agitated. *Storm and flood*—These symbolise the turmoils, dangers or calamities of life. *One fixed trust*—abiding or unshaken faith in the goodness of God. *My spirit clings*—My heart holds fast,

Explanation—The poet here expresses his unshaken faith in the essential goodness of God. The world is apparently full of moral and physical evils. One may find it difficult to

reconcile the presence of these evils with the goodness of God. One is apt to lose faith in the God when one finds oneself best with calamities. But the poet retains his faith in the goodness of God in spite of these apparent contradictions. He holds fast to the belief that God is essentially good though he sometimes is always for the good of man. Even death is not a curse for man. God has rather given death as a blessing to man, for death makes the soul free from the prison of the body.

Stanza 4. Gist—God gives strength to the weak.

Heart and flesh—body and mind. *Untried pain*—pain which has not been experienced by me before. *Bruised reed*—broken reed. A reed is a slender and tall water plant. The expression 'bruised reed' here figuratively means a weak and fragile person who cannot stand the misfortunes of life. The slender reed is apt to be broken by a strong gust of wind. Similarly a morally and physically weak person is apt to give way under a pressure of sufferings. The expression is biblical. "A bruised reed shall he not break" (St. Matthew XII, 20.)

The bruised.....break—God will not crush the spirits of those who are already weak and depressed. *Strengthen*—give strength and energy to. *Sustain*—support.

Explanation.—God gives strength and courage to the drooping spirits. The poet compares himself to a broken reed. He is weak and apt to go under with a very slight push. He has not the strength to stand the new kind of suffering which has not yet been tested by him just as the broken reed has not strength to stand a new blast of wind. God takes pity on the weak and the humble. Instead of crushing the weak, he will pour forth strength and energy into their hearts. The weak will feel the inspiration from God.

Stanza 5. Gist—The poet says that all that he can offer to God is God's own gift.

No offering.....have—I have nothing of my own which I may give to God, for everything I mean to give belongs to God Himself. *No works my faith to prove*—I have no outward actions to prove my faith in God. I cannot show by

any outward acts of piety that I trust in God. *I can but..... gave*--what I wish to offer to God is what God Himself offers to me. I have nothing of my own which I can offer to God. *And plead His love for love*--the love which I show to God or to men is what God has taught me. Human love is what has been inspired by God Himself; explain human love as due to God's love. *Plead*--adduce in proof; offer as reason.

Explanation.--The poet here means to say that there is nothing which he can give to God, for everything belongs to God. All his offerings, all his actions are God's own. He may claim to have done righteous deeds to prove his faith in God, but these deeds are prompted by God Himself. He has no capacity of his own to perform acts of piety. He may make offerings of various things to God, but those things are not his own creation but God's. So he can present no offerings of his love to God. He may boast of his own love to God or to God's creation, but that love also is not his own, it is inspired by God Himself. God is the fountain of all love.

Stanza 6. Gist--the poet waits for his peaceful death and always trusts in the loving protection of God.

Silent sea--sea of eternity, i. e. death. *Muffled oar*--the oar is an implement for impelling a boat, a slender piece of timber with a flat blade on the one end and a handle on the other. The oar is 'muffled' when that part which rests in the row lock, is wrapped up with something, so that the noise of rowing might be prevented. *Wait*--wait for; await. *Beside the student:.....oar.* The Poet means to say that he waits to be peacefully and imperceptibly carried away through the sea of eternity to the other world. The poet fancies himself standing on the shore of the eternal sea, that is, he waits for death. The expression 'muffled oar' suggests that the Pilot will guide him through the eternal sea noiselessly; that is, the poet hopes his soul will pass peacefully to the other world. The idea here is similar to that of Tennyson's 'Crossing the Bar'--

Sunset and evening star
And one clear call for me,

And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea.

No harm..... shore—The poet feels confident that God will protect him wherever he might be, whether on the sea or on land.

Explanation.—The poet places absolute faith in the mercy and loving protection of God. He is not afraid of death. He calmly waits for death. He knows God will guide him like a pilot through the eternal sea to the other world, and he will not feel the least pangs of death. He trusts that God will protect him against all sorts of danger on land or on sea.

Stanza 7. Gist.—The poet believes that God will take him to safe place after death,

Islands—the island of the Blessed. According to Greek mythology the favourites of the Gods or the righteous are carried after death to the islands supposed to lie in the Western Ocean, where they dwell in everlasting joy. *Froned palms*—palm trees with peculiar leaves called fronds. *Drift*—float or be driven away (by the current of water.) *I cannot.....care*—the poet believes that whatever his soul may sail or pass after death, he will be protected by God who bestows his infinite love and mercy upon him. *Lift.....in air*—produce the tall palm trees which rise to great heights.

Explanation.—The poet sincerely believes in the mercy and loving protection of God. It is said in Greek mythology that the souls of the virtuous after leaving the earthly body retire to a blissful place call the Islands of the Blessed, where there are tall palm trees with their peculiar leaves undulating in the air. The poet says that he does not care to know whether there is such a place as Islands of the Blessed, or what is the exact location of the place. But he knows it for certain that wherever God might take him after death, he will enjoy the loving care and protection of God.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. 1. Give the substance of the poem, and indicate the meaning of the title.

Ans. See 'Summary' and 'Title.'

Q. 2. What do you learn about the poet from this poem?

Ans. See Critical Note.

Q. 3. Explain:—

(a) Yet in the.....good (St. 2)

(b) And if my heart.....sustain (St. 4)

(c) And so beside.....shore (St. 6)

(d) I know not.....care (St. 7)

Ans. See Notes.

ULYSSES

A Note on the Author.

Alfred Tennyson (1809—1892) was born at Somersby where his father was rector. He was a student of Trinity College where he cultivated acquaintance with Arthur Hallam and others. In 1822 he won the Chancellor's Medal. The year 1850 was the most eventful in his life. In that year he married Emily Sellwood, and became Poet Laureate on the death of Wordsworth. In 1884 he was raised to the peerage. In 1886 he received a shock at the death of his younger son. This led to frequent attacks of illness and ultimately to death.

Literary Characteristics.

Tennyson was a representative Poet of his age. He expressed in his poetry the main tendencies of the Victorian age. Thus *Ulysses* represents the Renaissance spirit, the spirit of discovering new fields of thought, which characterise the people of the 12th century.

Tennyson was a great landscape painter. By words and phrases he could call up a picture. He closely observed the thing he described. He chose words and epithets that are pictures. He had a strong sense of colour. He possessed a wonderful descriptive power.

Tennyson created a poetic style of his own—rich, highly-coloured and elaborate. He preferred purely Saxon words to Latin vocabulary. His poetic style was a little artificial, for he had certain tricks of phrasing and expression. His style

has been called ornate. He drew his similes from the rich storehouse of Nature, hence the aptness and felicity of his imagery.

Tennyson was also a great musician. He deliberately chose the melodious vowels and consonants. He sought to enrich the music of his verse by making experiments in a variety of rhythms and measures.

Date of Composition.

"*Ulysses*," Tennyson himself says, 'was written soon after Arthur Hallam's' death, and gave my feeling about the need of going forward, and braving the struggles of life, perhaps more simply than anything in *In Memoriam*." The poem was published in the volume of 1842.

Source.

The poem is based on a passage in Dante's *Inferno*, Canto xxvi. It is related there that neither affection for his son, nor reverence for his aged father, nor love for his wife, Penelope, could conquer Ulysses' passion for knowledge and experience; that Ulysses set out again with the small company that had not yet deserted him till they had reached the narrow pass (i. e., the straits of Gibraltar) where Hercules placed the limit of the world. The sentiment that breathes in the following lines—

"How dull it is to pause, to make an end,

To rust unburnished, not to shine in use !

As tho' to breathe were life."

seems to owe its origin to a similar thought in Dante—"O brothers, who through a hundred thousand dangers have reached the west, deny not this to the brief vigil of your senses that remain—experience of the unpeopled world beyond the Sun. Consider your origin; you were not formed to live like brutes, but to follow virtue and knowledge." We may note here that Tennyson has touched the original to a finer issue; Dante's *Inferno* has supplied him with the bare outline, but Tennyson has clothed it with new details and has added a grace and sublimity of which there is no suggestion in the original, and has adapted the poem to the modern spirit, while preserving the essentially Greek character of the hero.

Tennyson does not follow Homer who makes Ulysses return alone, after all his companions had perished in the sea.

Central Thought.

The central idea in the poem is that action is the chief end of life and that inactivity means death. The idea is summed up in the lines—

"How dull it is to pause to make an end,
To rust unburnished, not to shine in use.
As tho' to breathe were life."

Every hour rightly used is snatched from the void of eternal silence, and adds to our experience. The human soul cannot cease from its striving after knowledge, and will always be drawn by the attraction of the unknown—"the untravell'd world" that gleams in the distance. In other words, the time life of the soul consists in unceasing activity in aspiration to embrace the whole universe by knowledge.

Critical Remarks.

(a) 'Ulysses' is the last of the classical poems written by Tennyson and "from contemplation's point of view the best."

(b) *Nature*—Tennyson has touched Nature in this poem in a masterly way. The scene is not on the shore of Ithaca at the port. The time is evening. The moon is rising and sea is gloomed by the shadows of the coming night. There is no description of the landscape, but enough is given to make us feel the time and place. Tennyson has described the whole world of ocean weather and of sea-experience with extraordinary brevity and force.

(c) *Renaissance Note*.—Tennyson's *Ulysses* breathes spirit of the Renaissance which lies in the restless craving of the soul, the attraction of the unknown.

"Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move."

Tennyson's *Ulysses* reflects more the spirit of Tennyson's own age than that of Homer's. Tennyson's hero appears

as an explorer of the 19th century, which is an age of scientific investigations and discoveries of new fields of thought.

There is a *human interest* in the poem, which is associated with the temper of the Renaissance spirit—the human soul cannot rest, the unknown always lures on to action.

(d) *Autobiographical Interest.* Tennyson's *Ulysses* reflects the character of Tennyson himself. As Stopford A. Brookes has remarked, "This too is Tennyson, I have heard it said that in this poem he drew the portrait of his own mind. I can well believe it and it is a noble temper with which to step into the fuller manhood of middle life. Indeed he never thought it too late to seek in his own art a newer world. Even at eighty years he took new subjects and tried new ways in poetry. The cry of his *Ulysses* was the cry of his old age."

(e) *Literary Characteristics.* Tennyson had a fine ear for delicate rhythms and cadences. The melody of his verse was the outcome of his conscious deliberate efforts. He chose words for their melodious sounds, on the principle of *sound echoing sense*. He employed mostly melodious vowels and liquid consonants (l, m, n, r)—

The light begins to twinkle from Mocks
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs.

One of the leading characteristics of Tennyson's style is the repetition of a word, e. g.,

"Free hearts, free foreheads."
"That which we are, we are."

Alliteration i. e., repetition of the same initial sounds in different words, and assonance, i. e., similarity of sound between two words, abound in Tennyson's poetry, e. g., hungry heart; some work of noble note; drunk delight of battle; like a sinking star; said beyond on the sunset.

(f) *Form of the Poem.* The poem is cast in the form of a dramatic monologue. Tennyson has expressed his own ideas through the mouth of his hero. *Ulysses* speak in a language which is dramatically vivid.

(g) *Metre and Versification.* The poem is written in Blank Verse (Iambic pentameter with occasional trochees). One critic remarks about Tennyson's Blank Verse—"The most important of all Tennyson's contributions to the riches of English metre probably is Blank Verse, regenerating that metre from the lamentable condition to which Wordsworth had reduced it. Tennyson proved himself capable of drawing from the measure a sustained charm which no one since Milton had achieved." Tennyson however, often tends to detach his thoughts in single lines and short passages, and we have very few examples in him of Milton's verse—paragraphs with their concerted music—We have one such example in the ten lines of Ulysses that begin—

"There lies port; the Vessel puffs her sail."

But if Tennyson lacks Milton's variety and grandeur, he avoids Milton's frequent roughness

Summary

Ulysses with his insatiable passion for knowledge and action, expresses his dissatisfaction with his own people who pursue no high ideal, but simply hoard and sleep and feed. He cannot reconcile himself to a tame domestic life with an aged wife.

He expresses his resolve to set out on travels again and to drink life to the lees. He has both suffered and enjoyed greatly, and it would be unworthy of him to rust idly at home without use.

His name has spread far and wide, He has known cities of men, manners, climates, councils governments, He had been an honoured 'guest' in different countries that he visited. He has the experience of battle in which he has fought side by side with his companions on the plains of Troy.

He is a part of all that he has seen. Yet however considerable his experience may be, it is like an arch through which he catches a glimpse of the infinite domain of knowledge and experience still left unexplored. How tedious it is to pause in the midst of an active life and to rust in disuse,

If Ulysses had been granted many lives, they would not suffice to exhaust the whole field of human experience and

knowledge, and of his single life there remains but little, he must therefore make the best of it. Every hour spent in activity is snatched from the silence of the grave. Inactivity, in fact, means death. He is old and, can only count up on a few more years of life: and it will be vile of him to withdraw into a secluded life, while his spirit is yearning to follow knowledge beyond the limit that has yet been reached by mankind.

Ulysses now speaks of his son Telemachus to whom he wants to leave his kingdom to rule. Telemachus is dear to Ulysses. He is intelligent enough to fulfil the duties of kingship, and to win over a savage people by slow prudence, and employ them for good and useful purposes by his gentle measures. Telemachus is most blameless. He is taken up with the common duties and responsibilities of life. He has good sense enough to be respectful to his mother, and to attend to the household gods. Let Telemachus do the domestic work, for which he is fit, while Ulysses will do his own work of exploring the unknown, for which he is fitted by his own adventurous spirit and character.

Ulysses now turns his eyes to the part where the vessel is riding at anchor. He invites his comrades to come and follow him; they may yet reap the glory of old age. Death will close all, old age has yet work to do. They may yet achieve distinction.

The day draws to a close; lights begin to twinkle in the house on the rocks. The sea calls with its soft murmuring voice. It is not yet too late to seek a newer world. Ulysses invites his comrades to come and take part in this glorious work, for his purpose is to sail beyond the sunset and to reach the extremity of the world.

Ulysses does not know what may happen to them, yet they ought to make the attempt. The sea may swallow them up or they may arrive at the happy Isles. Though their youthful energy and strength have decayed, their will is still strong and what they were, they still are—one equal temper of heroic hearts.

Notes and Explanations

Lines. 1—5. Gist—Ulysses cannot reconcile himself to a

same domestic life with an old wife and amidst uncultured people.

It little profits—it is of no use. *An idle king*—a king who has practically nothing to do as contrasted with adventurous life led by him. *Hearth*—domestic fire-side. *By the still hearth*—in the quiet atmosphere of domestic life. *Barren*—unproductive, Ithaca of which Ulysses was king ~~was~~ a rocky and barren island. *Matched with*—married to; in the company of. *Aged wife*—old wife. Penelope. *Met* and *dole*—measure and deal out; dispense justice carefully. Ulysses expresses contempt for administering justice, which is a slow and tedious work, involving nice considerations of legal points, and of the claims of contending parties. [The metaphor is that of weighing out wares like a petty shop-keeper.] *Unequal laws*—imperfect laws, an arbitrary government for a savage race. *Savage race*—people who are not sufficiently advanced to follow high ideals, Ulysses is dissatisfied with the narrow aims and aspiration of his own people. *Hoard*—make money and amass it, Ulysses means to say that they do not know a right use of money. *Sleep and feed*—they have nothing to do in life except satisfying the physical needs. *Know not me*—Ulysses had been absent from Ithaca for 20 years and his people are not likely to know him so much as to have natural affection for him. Rowe and Webb have explained 'Know not me' as 'are unable to appreciate or understand my adventurous spirit?'

Explanation.—Ulysses expressed his dissatisfaction with his home life. He is tired of the quiet atmosphere of domestic life, among the rugged hills of Ithaca. At home he will have to live in the company of his old wife Penelope who has no sympathy with his lofty aspirations, and administer imperfect laws to a semi-barbarous race that simply eat; sleep and make money and cannot appreciate his adventurous spirit or high ideal.

Lines 6—17. Gist—Ulysses expresses his resolve to set out on travels again. He is a man of varied experiences, so he cannot rust idly at home. He has experienced the delight of battle in the plains of Troy,

Rest from travel—refrain from setting out on travels again. The quiet, uneventful domestic life falls upon

Ulysses. *Drink life to the lees*—I will exhaust life of all that it can yield to satisfy my thirst for knowledge. *Lees*—dregs of wine. 'To drink a cup to the lees' means 'to drink the whole of it including even the sediment at the bottom; so Ulysses means he will leave no branch of knowledge or experience unexplored. Life is likened to a cup of wine. Ulysses will drink off the wine until not a drop is left at the bottom. This means he will wear out his life in activity; he will leave no region of experience unexplored. *Enjoyed*—enjoyed my life; derived the greatest pleasure that I could have from life. *Both with..... alone*—Ulysses refers to his various adventures after the fall of Troy. We reached home alone, after most of his companions had perished. *On shore*—on land, e. g., in the island of the one eyed giant Polyphemus. *Scudding*—driven before the wind. *Drifts*—masses of clouds driven across the sky. *Rainy Hyades*—a group of seven stars in the head of Taurus, the rising and setting of which were supposed to threaten rain. *Vext*—agitated. *Dim*—The sea is dim because it is darkened by the frown of the sky. *I am become a name*—I have gained an immortal fame; my name has become synonymous with the spirit of adventure. *Roaming*—wandering. *Hungry heart*—heart eager to know and see things. *Much have.....known*—I have acquired a good deal of experience. *Cities of men*—populous cities. *Councils*—This may refer to the republican institutions established in many parts of Greece. *Myself not least etc.*—Ulysses means that he has played an important part in, and has been associated with all that he has seen and known, and has enjoyed honour wherever he has gone. *Drunk delight of battle*—experienced the joys of battle. Battle is a very pleasant game to those who have a passion for fighting. Ulysses was one of the Greek heroes who fought in the Trojan War. *Peers*—equals. *With*—(1) with the other Greek princes who took part in the siege of Troy. (2) against the Trojan warriors who were not inferior in bravery to the Greeks. *Ring*—resounding with the noise of battle. *Windy*—storm—tossed. 'Windy' is a permanent epithet of 'Troy.'

Explanation.—*I cannot.....Troy.* Ulysses expresses his determination to set out on fresh adventures. He would

exhaust life of all that it can yield to satisfy his hankering after knowledge. He would explore every branch of knowledge, just as one may drink off the whole contents of a cup of wine, even the sediment. He has enjoyed great pleasures of adventure, and also experienced hardships, sometimes in the company of his devoted friends and sometimes all alone, sometimes on land and sometimes on the sea when it was made stormy by the Hyades, (a constellation of stars whose rising and setting are supposed to threaten rain.) Ulysses has won a world-wide fame. He has acquired a considerable experience. He has seen and known much, wandering with a heart consumed with a passion for knowledge. He has seen populous cities, climates, councils, governments. He has played an important part in all that he has seen. He has been an honoured guest in the different countries he has visited. He has experienced the wild delight of battle with his comrades, far away on the plains of storm-tossed Troy, resounding with the noise of battle.

Lines 18—32; Gist—Ulysses knows that there is no limit to human knowledge and experience. He would not enjoy rest, but spend the few remaining years of his life in fresh adventures.

I amhave met—I am associated with all that I have seen. Ulysses means his character is a compound of various experiences. *Yet all experience*—however considerable my experience may be. *An arch*—an arched gateway. *Wherethro'*—through which, *Gleams*—is revealed to view. *Untravelled world*—i. e., the domain of knowledge and experience yet unexplored or undiscovered. *Margin*—boundary line. *Fades*—becomes hazy and indistinct like the horizon. Ulysses means to say that the more he advances, the farther the boundary line of the region of knowledge and experience recedes into the vague distance. *Dull*—tedious. *Pause*—refrain from activities. *Make an end*—put a stop to the activities of life. *Rust unburnished*—grow rusty without use. A sword grows rusty if it is not used; similarly, a man loses his spirit of enterprise, if he refrains from activities. *To shine in use*—to keep always fresh and bright by pursuing an active life. *As tho'.....life*—Life does not consist in mere breathing, i. e., sleeping and eating. There would be

no difference between man and beast if the chief end of life were the satisfaction of physical needs *Life piled on life*—a great many lives. *Where all too little*—would be too insufficient to exhaust knowledge. *And of one.....remains*—of a single life that has been granted to me there remains but little. During a single life a man can hardly acquire a small particle of infinite knowledge and Ulysses has spent the greater part of that life. *Every hour*—every hour rightly employed or spent in activity. *Is saved*—is snatched up from the void of eternal silence. Ulysses means to say that real life consists in action and that a man who does not work, is dead. *Eternal silence*—silence of death. Every hour is silently lapsing into a sea of eternal silence; we can arrest it only by making a right use of it. *Something more*—i. e., not only can we save the hour from the void of eternal silence by making the right use of it, but we can gain additional experience. *A bringer.....things*—an hour spent in activity adds to the stock of our experience. *Vile*—mean. *It were*—it would be. *Three suns*—three years that I expect at most to live. The earth takes one full year to make a complete revolution round the sun; 'three suns' stand for 'three years.' *To store.....myself*—to keep myself from action; to spare my energy. *Vile it were etc.*—It would be quite unworthy of myself who had spent so many years in strenuous activity to refrain in old age from work, which is the very breath of my life. *Gray*—aged. *Yearning in desire*—with the intense and passionate desire. *Like a sinking star*—like a star sinking below the horizon. Knowledge is compared to a star which sinks below the horizon to appear again in another world. *Utmost bound*—farthest limit. *Human thought*—collective experience of mankind. *Beyond.....thought*—beyond the utmost limit of knowledge and experience that has been attained by mankind. The star sets in one heaven (sky) in order to rise in another. Ulysses will follow knowledge as those who follow a star disappearing in their own world to rise again in another. In other words, he will discover new regions of knowledge and experience.

Explanation.—*I am a part.....more.*

Here Ulysses expresses his consuming passion for knowledge and experience. In the course of his travels he has

acquired a wide outlook. He has extended the bounds of his knowledge and experience but however considerable his knowledge and experience may be, they do not satisfy him. Ulysses must know and learn more. His considerable experience only opens to his view an infinite region of knowledge as yet unexplored, the boundary line of which recedes from him far into distance, as he proceeds towards it. In other words, the experience that Ulysses has acquired makes him perceive that there are still many things to be learnt and known, and increase his desire to explore this unknown region of knowledge. In fact, the more a man knows the more he perceives his own limitations and the greater is his passion for further knowledge.

[This passage breathes the spirit of the Renaissance—the restless craving of the soul. It reflects more the spirit of Tennyson's age than of Homer's.]

How dull.....new things—Ulysses has a high ideal of life. He knows that activity means life, and inactivity, death. He cannot therefore tolerate the idea of refraining from activities. He would ever pursue an active life and keep himself bright and fresh. As the region of knowledge and experience is unbounded Ulysses does not expect to exhaust it, even if he were granted many lives. He knows that a succession of lives would be too brief to acquire full knowledge and experience. Now, even of the single life granted to Ulysses there remains but little, he feels that he must make the best use of the few years that he has yet to live. Real life, as Ulysses conceives it, lies in action, inactivity is death. Therefore, every hour spent in activity is snatched up from the void of eternal silence, i. e., if we make the best use of the hour at our disposal we really live that hour, our aim in life is to acquire fresh experience; we are not living all the time while we sit idle and do not acquire fresh experience.

And vile it were.....human thought—Ulysses makes up his mind to set out on his travels in order to acquire fresh experience and knowledge. It would be quite unworthy of him, who had spent so many years in strenuous action, to make no further use of his energy and to were out in inactivity in his old age. He cannot refrain from travels when

his old spirit with the strength of youthful desire yearns to pursue knowledge like a star sinking below the horizon, even beyond the furthest limit of knowledge and experience as yet attained by mankind. Knowledge likened to a star that sets before the horizon to appear again in a new heaven, the idea being that those who follow such a star will surely discover a new world of knowledge and experience.

Lines 33—43. Gist—Ulysses now speaks of his son Telemachus to whom he would leave his kingdom to rule. Telemachus is dear to Ulysses. He is intelligent enough to rule the savage people.

This is my son—here is a dramatic touch aptly introducing Telemachus. *Mine own Telemachus*—his own begotten son. *To whom.....isle*—Ulysses leaves his hearth and home to Telemachus because an irresistible impulse drives him on to seek the unknown. *Sceptre*—sovereignty of the island of Ithaca. The sceptre is the symbol of royalty. *Well-loved of me*—dear to me. *Discerning*—intelligent enough. *Fulfil—carry on*. *This labour*—this tedious, unpleasant task of ruling and civilising my savage 'rugged' people. *Slow prudence*—wise measures slowly introduced. *Make mild*—civilize; win them over to gentle ways of life. *Rugged people*—people having no fine sentiments; a savage race. *Thro'.....degrees*—by gentle means and with gradual steps. *Subdue*—bend. *To.....good*—to the purpose of usefulness and goodness. *Subdue.....good*—teach them how to be good and useful; employ them for good and useful purposes. *Blameless*—innocent; of a stainless character. *Centred in*—absorbed in; occupied with. *Sphere*—range. *Common duties*—duties and responsibilities connected with the ordinary concerns of life. *Decent*—having the good sense or propriety. *Not to fail*—not to be lacking in. *Office*—duties. *Offices of tenderness*—kind attention to his mother. *Meet*—proper. *Adoration*—devotion. *Household gods*—there was a presiding deity in each household among the Greeks, and they believed that their welfare and prosperity in life depended a great deal upon paying proper respect and devotion to the household gods. It was the duty of the master of the house to see that they were not neglected. Ulysses expects his son to do his

duties properly to them. *When.....gone*—in my absence. *He works.....mine*—Ulysses here points out that his own duty and the duty of his son lie in different spheres, because their characters are different.

Explanation,—Most blameless.....mine.

Ulysses would leave to his son the task of ruling the savage people of Ithaca and of attending to domestic duties. His son Telemachus is immensely fitted for such tasks. He has a stainless character. He is wholly taken up with the common duties and responsibilities of life. He had good sense enough to be kind and devoted to his mother, and pay proper respect to the household duties in the absence of his father. His character stands in striking contrast to that of his father, so his sphere of duty is different from that of his father. His father was an unfit for domestic life, while he is quite fit for discharging the ordinary duties of life.

Lines 44--70. Gist—Ulysses turns his eyes to the point where the vessel is riding at anchor. He invites his comrades to come and follow him; they may yet earn fresh glory. His purpose is to sail beyond the sunset. Though they have lost their youthful strength of body, they have a strong will to struggle against odds.

There lies the port—by a single touch Tennyson makes the whole scene flash before our eyes. The port lies within view and Ulysses' heart leaps with joy at the prospect of adventure. *Puffs*—spreads forth. *Gloom*—look gloomy or hazy, in the distance. *My mariners*—my comrade sailors who shared in my adventures in the past. *Toiled*—suffered hardship. *Wrought*—worked; laboured. *Thought with me*—racked their brains in devising plans. When they fell into danger in course of their travels, they put together their heads to devise means of escape, e. g., in the island of Polyphemos when some of the comrades of Ulysses were eaten up by the giant. Ulysses and his surviving companion had to devise means of escape. *Frolic*—frolicsome; merry. *The thunder and sunshine*—the fair and the foul weather. *That ever..... sunshine*—who welcomed with a gay heart both fair and foul weather. As they were a forlorn band of voyagers, they

were prepared for the worst that might happen to them they did not mind either fair or foul weather. *Opposed*—confronted. This means opposition either against fate or against elements. *Free hearts*—bold and fearless hearts. *Free foreheads*—foreheads free from wrinkles or shadows of sorrow or anxiety. They opposed their free hearts and free foreheads to the warning elements. *Old age.....toils*—old age has in store for us fame and work. Ulysses means to say that even in old age it is not too late to seek fame in deeds of enterprise. *Death closes all*—death is the final end of everything in the world. The sentiment is in keeping with the Greek conception of immortality. The Greeks believed that after their death they were carried to a lower region known as Hades where as pale phantoms they dragged on a weary existence. Hades was a region without the lovely sunshine, without the smiling face of the moon or the glimmer of the stars, without the sweet joys of human existence. The Greeks naturally shrank from the idea of death. So they must do their work during their life on earth, as they did not look to a life beyond the grave in which they might carry on the work they had begun on earth. *Something.....end*—something may yet be achieved before death overtakes us. *Some works of noble note*—some deed of distinction. *Not unbecoming men*—not unworthy of men, *That.....Gods*—the reference is to the fact that gods and goddesses took part on both sides in the Trojan War, e. g., Venus and Mars took the side of the Trojans, and Artemis helped the Greeks. Ulysses as a Greek king fought on the Greek side. *The long day wanes*—the day draws to a close. This may also suggest the coming end of Ulysses' life. *The lights*—as the evening begins to approach, the lights twinkle in the houses on the rocks. *Twinkle*—glimmer. *The slow moon climbs*—this indicates the slow progress of night. *The deep*—the sea. *Moans*—wails. *With many voices*—with many varying calls. The soft and gentle murmur of the ocean seems to be a summon to Ulysses to go 'to seek a newer world;' it is the voice of the unknown which always allures Ulysses. 'Tis not.....world—they might yet be able to discover a new world. As they have strength of mood, no matter that their energy has decayed, they may be able to reap fame in old age. *Push off*—put out the ship to the sea. *Sitting....order*—

sitting in good orders. *Smite*—strike. *Sounding*—echoing. *Furrows*—the tracks left in the ocean by the plunging of oars. 'Furrow' means a cut made by the plough, here, furrow refers to the space between the waves. *i. e.*, the track made by the plunging of the oars. My purpose holds—my determination to seek a newer world remains firm. To sail.....sunset—to sail to the western extremity of the world. The baths... stars—the ocean where all the stars sink at setting. The reference is to the old notion of the spheres revolving round the earth. The eighth sphere (Firmament) contained the fixed stars so that with its revolution the stars dipped into the western seas. It may be—it is quite likely. Gulfs..... down—that the seas will swallow us up. Touch—arrive at. Happy Isles—Fortunate Insuloe, a group of islands in the Atlantic off the west coast of Africa, now identified with the Canary Isles. They formed the Greek Paradise the abode of the blessed after death. Achilles—son of Peleus and Thetis. He is represented in Homer's great Greek epic 'Iliad' as the typical Greek hero—handsome, brave, compassionate. After slaying Hector and other Trojan chiefs, he himself fell by the hand of Paris, receiving an arrow in the heel. Whom.....know—whom we knew in his life-time (for both Achilles and Ulysses fought in the Trojan war on the Greek side). Tho'.....taken—though our youthful energy and vigour have decayed. Abides—remains. Much abides—we have still a strong iron will, an unbending purpose. Tho'.....strength—though we are not as strong as we were in our youth. Strength—strong body of men. Strength—strong band of men (abstract for concrete), Which.....heaven—which performed Prodigies of valour in old days in the Trojan War. That which.....are—time and age have hardly altered our character. We are still what we were before—possessing the same strong will, the same love of enterprise, the same defiant spirit etc. One.....equal hearts—*i. e.*, a band of heroic hearts tempered to an equal degree of courage and firmness. In other words, they have the same power of endurance and the same indifference to danger—they are made of the heroic stuff. Made weak—enfeebled. Time and fate—by old age and adverse circumstances. But.....will—still having the same iron will. Strife—struggle. Seek—try to discover

new lands, Find—not to be satisfied till new lands have been discovered. Not.....yield—not to give way. The common elements in their disposition are strength of will, ceaseless striving, a passion for discovery, tenacity of purpose and indomitable mind.

Explanation.—Old age.....with Gods. Ulysses invites his comrades to follow him in his quest for fresh adventures. He tells his comrades that even in old age they might do some deeds of enterprise and earn fame. They know that the earthly life is final and they must do something before death overtakes them. Death is a miserable state, so even during their life on earth they must achieve some deeds of glory, not unworthy of them who had fought even with the Gods in the Trojan War.

Explanation.—The lights.....until I die. As the day draws to a close, and evening lights twinkle from the rocks, Ulysses' longing for the sea increases, and he invites his comrades to come with him. It is not yet too late to start to seek a new world; they may yet reap fame in old age. Let them put out the ship to sea; and as his purpose continues to be firm, they will sail to the west, for beyond the known limit of the world where the stars sink into the ocean; and they will surely be able to discover a new world.

[Some commentators have read an allegorical meaning into this passage. 'The long day' has been explained as the life of Ulysses drawing to a close, 'the show moon' has been explained as the soul of Ulysses, 'the deep' has been explained as the decline of Ulysses life. But such interpretation is rather forced.]

Explanation.—It may be.....yield. Ulysses is eager for a life of fresh adventures. He does not know what may happen to him and his comrades, yet they ought to make the attempt. The sea may swallow them up or they may arrive at the happy Isles, the Greek paradise where the blessed heroes retire after death, still they must not give up their longings for adventure. Though they have not that physical strength which enabled them to perform prodigies of valour in former years, yet they have not changed in their temperament. They are still a band of

heroic sailors characterised by the same powers of endurance, indifference to danger, tenacity of purpose and passion for discovery.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. 1. (a) Indicate the source of the poem.

(b) In what respects does Tennyson's Ulysses differ from Homer's ?

Ans. (a) See source.

(b) Homer's Ulysses after twenty years returns to his native island of Ithaca and settles in a peaceful domestic life again. He is sick of his adventurous life. But Tennyson's Ulysses is fed up with his home life. Even in his old age he would set out in quest of fresh adventures.

Q. 2. Sketch the character of Ulysses and contrast him with his son Telemachus.

Ans. Ulysses is an idealist. He cannot find any pleasure in a savage race "that hoard and sleep and feed" and are indifferent to the higher things of life. He has a contempt for tame domestic life. He is a restless roving spirit, a lover of action and enterprise—"I cannot rest from travel: I will drink life to the lees." He is a man of considerable experience—"Much have I seen and known." He has an ardent passion for further knowledge, an undying spirit of adventure inquisitiveness and a restless craving of the soul. The note of lofty idealism in Ulysses is touched with a noble and dignified spirit of melancholy in the lines—You and I are old,

Old age hath yet his honour and toil. Strength of will, tenacity of purpose, capacity for ceaseless striving are combined in his character with the passion of a geographical discoverer.

Telemachus is delineated as a set-off and contrast to Ulysses. Telemachus is a home-loving and home-keeping youth, while Ulysses is a restless raver of the seas. Telemachus is a man of slow prudence, while Ulysses is a man of prompt and energetic action. Telemachus is competent to carry on the tedious task of administration. He is most blameless, quite taken up with the common duties of life.

He has good sense enough not to fail in kind regards to his mother, and in devotion to the household gods.

Q. 3. Discuss the allegory of 'Ulysses'.

Ans. The allegory underlying 'Ulysses' is that the soul cannot rest; the unknown always lures the soul to action. The poem is an allegorical representation of the Renaissance spirit—the spirit of quest and conquest.

Q. 4. Discuss the autobiographical interest of the poem.

Ans. See Introduction

Q. 5. Write a note on Tennyson's treatment of Nature.

Ans. See Introduction.

Q. 6. Explain:—

(a) I will drink.....sea.

(b) I am.....known.

(c) Yet all experience.....move.

(d) Life.....new things.

(e) And vide.....human thought.

(f) For my purpose.....die.

(g) Tho' much.....yield.

Ans. See Notes.

THE QUEEN'S RIVAL

A Note on the Author.

Sarojini Naidu was born in Hyderabad on February 13, 1879. Her father was a great educationist. He wished her daughter to be a scientist or a mathematician. But fate made her a poet. She wrote her first poem at the age of eleven "when a sum in algebra would not come right." She matriculated from Madras University at the age of twelve. She married a Madras gentleman, Dr. M. G. Naidu. She was awarded the Nizam scholarship for higher studies in England. She spent three years in England. She visited Italy and her sensitive mind was stirred by the natural beauty of the place.

Sarojini Naidu at first attempted to write on western subjects but being instructed by the famous English critic Edmund Gosse devoted herself exclusively to Indian scenes and sentiments. In her poetry she has tried to interpret the East to the West. She has described the flowers, fruits and birds of India and revealed the heart of India.

Mrs. Naidu published three volumes of poems—*The Golden Threshold*, *The Bird of Time*, *Broken Wings*. Her genius is essentially lyrical. She is the most musical of all Indian poets who have tried to write in English. She expresses in her poems the joy of song, love of beauty and the idea of beauty. She has a remarkable power of drawing vivid pictures. A few of her poems have a philosophic aspect. In a letter to Arthur Symonds she writes "I am not a poet really, I have a vision and the desire but not the voice, I sing just as the birds do, and my songs are as ephemeral."

After 1917 Mrs. Naidu turned to politics. She is one of the most eloquent orators in India. She became a prominent member of the Indian National Congress.

Summary

I

Queen Gulnaar sat on her ivory bed in the midst of countless treasures. Her chamber walls were richly decorated with precious stones. Her veils were shining with gorgeous hues. She looked at her mirror and with a sigh of disappointment told the king that she felt her heart to be unsatisfied in spite of all her luxury and personal beauty. She further complained that she had no rival to envy her lot. King Feroz then ordered his chief vizier to send forth his messengers to distant lands to seek seven beautiful brides for him who would be handmaids to the Queen.

II

The king conducted seven beautiful maidens to the queen's hall and presented them all, one after another, to the queen. The seven maidens shone with their radiant beauty and as they stood round the ivory bed of the queen they looked like a string of beautiful gems. Queen Gulnaar

looked at them through her mirror, but still complained that she had no rival.

III

It was spring. Tulip flower buds blossomed; bees hummed; the oriole sang sweet notes. Queen Gulnaar sat on her ivory bed with her head adorned with jewels. She looked at her mirror and still complained to the king that her heart was unsatisfied.

Just at that moment Queen Gulnaar's daughter, two years old, in blue robes bordered with Tassels of gold, ran to the Queen's knee like a fairy, snatched away the mother's mirror, set her mother's hand on her own curly hair and swiftly kissed the mirror. Queen Gulnaar laughed at this and told the king that her heart was satisfied now that she had found a true rival in her own daughter.

Central Idea.

The central idea of the poem is that nothing appears to a woman so beautiful as her own daughter. A daughter is a reflection of her mother's beauty. A mother finds an exact picture of her own beauty in her daughter. Queen Gulnaar is not satisfied though seven maidens of exquisite beauty are presented to her as her rivals in beauty. She is satisfied as soon as her daughter of budding beauty comes and robs her of her mirror and fillet. There is a fine touch of psychology in the poem. It is a gratification of the woman's vanity to think her own daughter to be the most beautiful of all maidens.

Another idea, a secondary one which underlies the poem, is that happiness without any touch of sorrow, beauty without the experience of rivalry do not satisfy the human soul—so Queen Gulnaar says—"I tire of my beauty, I tire of this empty splendour, and shadowless bliss."

Notes and Explanations

I

Ivory—the hard, white, opaque substance constituting the tusk of the elephant. 'Ivory bed' is the bed made of ivory. This is a costly article of furniture. Countless treasures—innumerable valuable things. Chamber walls—

walls of the room occupied by her. Richly inlaid—decorated or set (with precious stones). Agate—a kind of precious stone. Propyry—precious marbles or red, purple and green varieties. Onyx—a kind of gem. Jade—an ornamental stone, usually green. Tissue—a fine transparent silk stuff. Veiled—covered. Delicate—beautiful. Glowed—glittered; shone. Hues—colours. Lap wing—a small bird of the plover family. It has long and broad wings and is noted for its rapid flight. Its back is coppery or greenish bronze. Crest—the lengthened feathers growing on the crown or head of the bird.

Explanation.—The tissues.....crest. The poetess describes the gorgeous apparel of the Queen Gulnaar. The charming breast of the queen was covered with a transparent silk fabric which was shining and variegated like the tuft of feathers on the head of the lapwing,

Still—continually; always. My heart is unsatisfied—your rich gifts still leave me discontent. I yearn for some thing more. Ebony—a hard, heavy and durable wood, usually of black colour, and admitting of a fine polish or glass. Ebony seat—throne made of ebony. O Sweet—O beloved queen. Is thy least desire unfulfilled?—Does there remain any wish of yours which has not yet been gratified by me? Let thy mouth speak—utter your heart's desire which still remains unfulfilled. Clear the sky of discontent—remove dissatisfaction from your mind. As clouds overcast the sky, so discontent spreads over the queen's mind.

Explanation.—But still.....discontent. Queen Gulnaar was dressed in splendid robes and saw her reflection in the mirror. She told the king that in spite of his rich gifts to her she felt unhappy. The king then asked the queen to give out her heart's wish so that he might make it the sole object of his life to remove her grievances. The king would remove all traces of unhappiness from the queen's mind just as the wind may drive away the clouds from the sky.

I tire of my beauty—I am sick of my physical beauty; it no longer pleases me. Empty splendour—vain beauty,

useless pomp and luxury. Shadowless bliss—happiness which has no tinge of sorrow in it; happiness which is obtained without any struggle. With none to envy—not exciting any jealousy on the part of a rival. Gainsay—deny. Savour—taste and smell; relish. Salt—substance used for seasoning food, flavour, taste. Like a murmuring rose—the whisperings of the rose played upon by the breeze are beautifully suggestive of the sighs of grief drawn by the queen. Also, the beauty of the rose suggests the beauty of the queen. Dream—ambition. Rival—competitor.

Explanation.—I tire.....King Feroz Queen Gulnaar complains to King Feroz that she is disgusted with her personal beauty and her easy happiness. She is without any rival. Her wealth and beauty do not excite the jealousy of any woman. She enjoys her happiness without any fear of losing it. She finds no real pleasure in such happiness obtained without a struggle. If there is no salt or flavour, the food becomes unfit to be eaten. Similarly, if there is no experience of struggle in realising one's dreams or ambition, that ambition is not worth having. So the queen cannot relish her happiness which she has got without the sense of a struggle. She therefore asks the king to give her a rival who would contest her beauty and wealth. Her sighs to the king have been compared to the breath of the rose as the wind blows over it. Her exquisite beauty also is suggestive of the delicate charms of the rose.

Chief Vizier—chief councillor. Ere—before. Lo !—interjection, drawing. Be here—come to my attention court. Over the sea—across the sea to various countries. Radiant of feature—of bright looks. Regal of mien—having the appearance of queenly majesty; having looks befitting those of a queen. Regal—royal. Handmaids—attendant's waiting maidens. Meet=suitable (to bear company with the Queen of Persia).

Explanation.—Send forth.....Queen. When Queen Gulnaar expressed a desire to have a rival, the king ordered his messengers to seek out seven beautiful ladies with bright, majestic looks, from distant lands, to

wait upon Queen Gulnaar. The King's idea was to excite the jealousy of his queen by setting up some rivals of her beauty,

II

Gist.—The king brought seven paragons of beauty to the presence of the Queen, but she still remained unsatisfied.

New moon—the moon when it first appears after being invisible. *Seven new moon tides*—the period of seven days during which the moon appeared after its being invisible. *At the vesper call*—in the evening. *Vesper* is the evening star, venus seen after sunset. *Led*—conducted. *Eyed like the morning star*—looked as bright and beautiful as the morning star. *Morning star*—any one of the planets Venus, Jupiter, Mars or Saturn) when it precedes the sun in rising, specially Venus. *Shone*—appeared with their shining or ornaments.

Explanation.—Seven queens.....thread. At first the king brought one beautiful lady to Queen Gulnaar to rouse feelings of jealousy in her. But as the queen was still unsatisfied the king presented all the seven maidens of exquisite charm before Queen Gulnaar. The seven maidens standing all together about the ivory bed of Queen Gulnaar, resembled in their charm seven beautiful gems strung together in a silk thread.

Royal tower—tower in the king's palace, a structure attached to the palace, higher than the rest of the edifice. *Petals*—coloured leaves of a flower.

Like seven.....Beauty's flower—The seven ladies brought from distant lands to excite the jealousy of Queen Gulnaar have been aptly compared to seven lamps hanging in the tower of the king's palace. The ladies were as bright and as beautiful as the lamps, and they stood side by side just like the lamps hanging close. The ladies have also been compared to the petals of a beautiful flower (like the rose). The petals shine in their beauty and remain closely huddled together. Similarly, the ladies shining in their superb beauty stood side by side round the ivory bed of Queen Gulnaar.

Sighed.....rose—see above. Where is my rival?—The question implies that Queen Gulnaar was not all moved to jealousy at the sight of exquisite beauty of the ladies.

III

Gist. At the advent of spring Queen Gulnaar still remained unsatisfied, when her daughter, two years old, suddenly snatched away the mother's mirror and set her mother's fillet on her own curls. Queen Gulnaar was now delighted to find a rival in her own daughter.

Wakened—caused to flow. Tulip—a kind of beautiful variegated flowers resembling a turban. Kindled the flame of—caused to blossom (into the red and bright flowers, resembling the flames of fire) Bees grew loud—Bees hummed loud. Peach groves—gardens of peach trees. the peach is the tree which bears a well-known, high-flavoured juicy fruit. Thrilled—felt a sharp, shivering sensation; vibrated. Oriole—a kind of singing bird, coloured with yellow and black. It has a very musical flute-like note. Decking—adorning. Exquisite—fine; excellent.

Explanation.—When spring.....unsatisfied. Queen Gulnaar felt a dissatisfaction in her heart though the king tried to evoke her jealousy by conducting to her presence seven beautiful maidens. She sat in this dissatisfied mood on her ivory bed, with her charming head adorned with jewels. It was spring time. The winds blew and caused the floods to gush out of the mountains. The flowers looked as blazing as the flames of ~~flower~~ ^{fire}. The bees began to buzz loudly. The days became long. The oriole sang sweet songs in the wood of peach trees and the wood vibrated with the notes of the oriole.

Two spring times old—two years old. Robes—clothes. Tassels—hanging bunch of silk. Like a wild wood fay—like a beautiful little fairy living in a forest. Light curls—light tingers of hair. Fillet—a band worn round the head. Fringes of pearls—ornamental borders of pearls. With a child's caprice—as whimsically as a natural for a child to do. Pressed—imprinted. Tremulous—trembling (in the breeze). Like a tremulous rose—her voice trembling as a rose trembles in the breeze. Here is my rival—The Queen

expresses her satisfaction at having found a true rival in her daughter.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. 1. Sketch the story of 'Queen Rival' and indicate the idea sought to be conveyed in the piece.

Ans. See Summary and Central Idea.

ECSTASY ✓

Summary

The poet feels a transport of joy at the sights and sounds of the approaching spring. The meadows and groves are clothed with fresh verdure. The Koels sing sweet songs of love. The rivers are flowing on brightly, making a musical murmur. The variegated peacocks are dancing merrily.

In the midst of the joys of the spring season we should forget our personal sorrows. We should participate in the gaiety of the birds and the streams. We must not allow the thoughts of our future years to cloud our present joys.

Title of the Poem. The title 'Ecstasy' means 'excess of joys', 'rapture'. The poet feels elated with an excess of joy at the sights and sounds of the vernal season, hence the title. The present joys of the season are such as to make the poet forget all personal griefs.

Critical Note. There is an echo of Wordsworth in the poem. Sarojini Naidu takes the joy of song and love of beauty as the chief themes of her poetry. The poem also illustrates Mrs. Naidu's interest in Indian birds and Indian scenes. She speaks of the 'mellifluous Koels' and 'sumptuous peacock.'

Notes and Explanations

Stanza 1.—Gist. The heart of the poet responds to the beautiful sights and sounds of Nature—the sweet music of the Koel, the bright flow of the river and the merry dancing of the variegated peacock.

Heart, O my heart—The poet invokes his own soul. **The spring time.....grove—**The fresh verdure of the meadow and wood indicates that the spring is approaching. **Grove—**

a small wood. Mellifluous—flowing sweetly or smoothly. Koel—a species of singing bird of the oriental countries. Poem—a loud and joyous song. Poem of love—The Koel's song is supposed to be inspired by love. Behold—See. Rill—a very small book, streamlet. Glancing—shining; shooting a flash of light. Melodious—musical. In their.....flight—as they flow on glittering in the rays of the sun and making a musical murmur. Sumptuous—splendid; magnificent. In rhythmic delight—joyfully moving in musical time as it were.

Explanation.—The poet feels an ecstasy of delight at the beautiful sights and sounds of nature at the advent of spring. When spring is approaching, field and woods were a green and fresh aspect. Vegetation grows in profusion. The Koels sing charming songs which are inspired by the holy passion of love. The big rivers and the small streams flow on with a musical murmur and they look sparkling in the rays of the sun. The splendid-looking peacocks dance merrily in measured beats as if keeping time in music.

Stanza 2—Gist. The delights of the spring season would make the poet forget the cares and sorrows of life at least for the time being.

Exquisite—delightful. Life's exquisite colours—the various pleasures or delights of the spring season which are harmoniously blended together just like the several musical voices combined together in a chorus of music. Rapturous—manifesting extreme joy or pleasure. Rapturous season of blossom and leaf—the delightful spring season when flowers blossom and fresh leaves grow on trees. Shall we.....leaf?—Is it proper for us to indulge in our private griefs when all about Nature we find signs of joy? The idea is that man should join the universal joy that prevails in Nature—he should not strike a discordant note in the universal harmony of Nature. Their joy.....sing—Let us share with the delights of the birds and rivers. The birds express their joy through their songs, and the rivers, through their musical murmur. Sing—pour forth the joy of our heart. The years.....sorrow—Sorrow lies in store for us in future, but the thoughts of the future woe should not mar our present happiness. Today it is spring—Let us enjoy the present, because

it is the happy spring season now. Let not the gloom of future woe darken our happy present.

Explanation.—In the spring season all the joys of nature are harmoniously blended together. The birds sing merrily, the streams flow on with their musical prattle. The trees look fresh with green leaves and flowers. It is not proper that man should indulge in his selfish griefs at this season and mar the universal spirit of joy that prevails in Nature. Man's life is no doubt full of unhappiness and in future years also he is declined to suffer woe. The poetess says that man should at least for the time being banish all his thoughts of woe, and join the universal joy of Nature.

The idea of this stanza reminds us of the following lines of Wordsworth's Ode on Immortality,

"Now," while the birds thus sing a joyous song,

And while the young lambs bound

As to the tabor's sound,

To me alone there came a thought of grief

* * * * *

No more shall grief of mine the season wrong."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. 1. Indicate the meaning of the title, and the idea of the piece.

Ans. See Summary and Title.

Q. 2. Explain.

Shall we.....spring.

Ans. See Notes.

MICHAEL

Life of the Poet.

William Wordsworth (1770--1850) was born at Cocker-mouth in Cumberland, and was educated at Hawkshead Grammar School, and St. John College, Cambridge, where he took his B. A. degree in 1791. He went to France and hailed the dawn of the French Revolution. He got a legacy of £ 200. Then he settled at Alfoxden where he lived

with his sister Dorothy. In 1778 he and Coleridge together produced *Lyrical Ballads*. He married his cousin Mary Hutchinson. On Southey's death he obtained the laureateship in 1843. He died on 23rd. April, 1850, at the age of eighty.

Literary Characteristics.

"Wordsworth is one of the world's most loving, penetrative and thoughtful poets of Nature. He found much of his greatest joy in the presence of her calm, her beauty, her external revelations of a Divine hand. For him nature possessed a soul, a conscious existence, an ability to feel joy and love".

Wordsworth was not a purely descriptive and narrative poet. He was too much engrossed with the feeling inspired by the scene. His genius was more of reflective and lyrical than of narrative type.

Wordsworth's poetry of Man is concerned not with kings and princes, but with the unambitious dalesman with his strong affections, and simple tastes, the Highland girl full of innocence and sweetness.

In his preface to the 'Lyrical Ballads' Wordsworth enunciated his theory of Poetic Diction. He maintained that poetry should leave the stereotyped phraseology of books revert to the language which common men, even peasants, use when their conversation is animated; that the language of good prose.

Wordsworth wrote his poems mostly in conformity with his theory. This accounts for the austere simplicity and a certain matter of factness in his style. "It might seem that Nature not only gave him the matter of his poem, but wrote his poem for him".

Date of composition—*Michael* was composed between October 11 and December 9, 1800; published, 1800, *Story of Michael*.

In a lonely vally of Grasmere, neer the noisy river that flows by the Ravine of Greenhead, there lived a shepherd named Michæel.

Michæl was stout of heart and strong of limb. He was a skilful and experienced shepherd and could forecast the weather from the winds. His knowledge of the weather often helped him to rescue his flocks of sheep from coming storms. Michæl's daily work brought him into intimate contact with Nature.

Michæl led a frugal and industrious life with his wife Isabel, who was twenty years younger than himself. Apart from her domestic duties, Isabel was ever busy with her spinning wheel, till late at night. Hence Michæl and his wife became a proverb for industry in the neighbourhood. A son was born to Michæl in his old age. He was named Luke. Michæl loved his son Luke with deep affection. And Luke brought new hopes and longings to the father. Even when Luke was a little boy, he began to help his father in his work. Since his boyhood he had been the daily companion of his father. Michæl was not an indulgent father, and Luke received the best training that a boy could get. Passing years deepened the affection between the two. Nature had a new meaning and beauty to Michæl in consequence of the boy's companionship. They were a happy family—Michæl, his wife and his son.

Then troubles followed. Michæl had bound himself as security for his brother's son who was a business man. Unfortunately the latter's business failed, and Michæl was called upon to pay the forfeiture. After long hesitation Michæl had to sell off half his property to meet the demand.

Michæl was very much grieved at the sale of his ancestral property. So at last he decided to send Luke to a kinsman of his in London. This kinsman would set Luke up in business. Michæl expected that he would be able to redeem the property with the money that Luke would earn in London. On the evening before Luke left for London, Michæl took him along to the valley. Here Michæl had heaped up stones for the purpose of building a sheep fold.

Michæl told Luke the whole story—how the ancestral land was burdened with debts when it first came to him;

how he had recovered it after life long and ceaseless toil; and then how unexpectedly he was called upon to sell half his property because of the failure of his brother's son in business. Michael told Luke that he could not bear to think that his property should pass into a stranger's hand. Michael also spoke of his deep affection for his son. But he must part with Luke; for Luke must go to the city, earn there and buy back the sold properties with his earnings. In order that this spiritual bond between Michael and Luke might be continued, Michael begged Luke to lay on stone for the sheep fold. So this was to be a covenant between father and son—they would be still united in spirit, though they were far away.

So Luke went to London. At first favourable reports of Luke's progress came from the kinsman. Luke too wrote nice letters to his parents. Michael went about his work with a cheerful and confident heart. But later Luke slackened in his duty and yielded to the temptation of city life. At last he was guilty of a dishonest act, and sought safety in a foreign country.

The news of Luke's downfall very nearly broke Michael's heart. But "the strength of love" sustained him. Michael attended to his sheep and to his work on the fields. Now and then he would go to the valley to work at the sheep fold. But people said that many and many a day Michael went to the valley, but never lifted up a single stone. For seven weary years Michael worked occasionally at the sheep fold; but he left it incomplete when he died. Isabel survived him three years. At her death the property was sold. The cottage in which they dwelt had disappeared. But the remains of the sheep fold could still be seen near "the boisterous brook of Greenhead Ghyll."

Analysis of the Poem.

1. Introduction—(a) *The scene of the story*, the straggling heap of stones beside the brook of Greenhead Ghyll described.

(b) *The character of the story*—a domestic tale that first roused Wordsworth's interest in the joys and sorrows of common men. (Lines 1—39.)

2. Michael as a shepherd—skilled and experienced—stout of heart and strong of limb—always risking his own life to save the lives of the sheep in storm and mist. (Lines 40—60.)

3. Michael's fellowship with Nature—a pleasurable feeling of blind love. (Lines 61—77.)

4. Michael's wife—twenty years younger than himself—both proverbial for their industry—Luke was born in their old age. The lamp burning in their cottage and visible at a great distance—symbol of their industrious life. The house called 'The Evening Star.' (Lines 78—139.)

5. The growing affection of Michael for his son—Michael, not an indulgent father, training up Luke as a shepherd boy. Constant companionship between father and son, and Nature begins to have a new meaning and beauty for Michael. So Luke grows up to be a lad of eighteen years. (Lines 140—205.)

6. Crisis in the affairs of Michael—Michael had been bound in surety for his brother's son, and the latter fails him. His decision to send Luke to a kinsman in London, which is communicated to Isabel. Isabel's failure to keep her son at home; Isabel is busy getting things ready for Luke's journey. (Lines 207—304.)

7. The letter from Michael's kinsman—with his assurances to do his best for Luke, Michael decides that Luke should leave next day. (Lines 305—321.)

8. Michael's visit with Luke to the scene of the sheep-fold—on the evening before the latter's departure. Michael relates the story of his life to his son, speaks of his love for his son and begs him to lay one stone for the sheep fold—which is to be a covenant between father and son. And their return home. (Lines 322—430.)

9. Luke in London—at first good reports about Luke come from the kinsman—Luke's moral downfall and flight to a foreign country. (Lines 431—446.)

10. Michael crushed by his son's moral downfall—no spirit in his work. The sheep fold left unfinished when he dies. His wife follows him to the grave in three years.

and the property is sold on her death. The cottage is gone, the remains of the sheep fold are still to be seen. (Lines 447--482.)

Critical Appreciation.

Michael is a narrative poem. But Wordsworth is not a good teller. His gifts are lyrical and reflective rather than narrative. So as a narrative poem *Michael* is defective. It lacks life and movement. It has none of the characteristics of the narrative poem, viz., a plot, a complex situation, a story with a permanent appeal to human nature. It is not well-proportioned, that is, the various parts of the story are not well balanced. For example, the dialogues take up most part of the poem, and the denouncement is given only in a few lines. The story ends all too abruptly. It is a rambling story. But the story for the story's sake does not interest Wordsworth. Wordsworth is a philosopher and as such more interested in unfolding human feelings and sentiment. The strength of love in the human heart is the point on which Wordsworth concentrates. He makes clear his object of writing the story in lines 21 to 26—"It was the first of those domestic tales.....where was their occupation and abode." In other words, he wants to depict the character of a man who enjoyed the domestic felicity of the remote country life and also to delineate the natural atmosphere in which he lived. Wordsworth adheres to make reality without any poetic embellishments. The pathetic incident which broke the heart of Michael has not been dilated upon with any poetic ornaments. Wordsworth himself in his preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* has set forth his principal object in writing such poems—"To choose incidents and situations from common life and to relate or describe them throughout in a selection of the language really used by men, and at the same time to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect."

Michael is an illustration of Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction. He chooses for his theme a humble life with its rustic surroundings, and describes it in a simple and expressive language full of pathos and natural eloquence. It is

a story of human affection and disappointment. The scene at the sheep fold is most affecting. The sturdy shepherd "of a stern unbending mind," at last breaks down, and weeps on the shoulder of his son. It is an unforgettable picture—the picture of an old father of eighty-four, whose heart bleeds within him at his parting from an only and dearly loved son. There is another picture still—the old, affectionate father, the sturdy shepherd—broken, crushed and humiliated by his son's moral degradation. The pathos of the picture is condensed into the two lines:

"Many and many a day he thither went;
And never lifted up a single stone."

Opinions of Critics.

"We have in *Michael* Wordsworth at his best and most characteristic, the simple and expressive language rising at times to poignant eloquence; the rustic scene; the pathos trenchant but not tender—an iron pathos; and above all the deep and sympathetic knowledge of the human heart. In a letter to Charles Fox, Wordsworth speaks of *Michael* and *The Brothers* as poems written with a view to show that *Men who do not wear fine clothes can feel deeply*. The personages and the sheepfold are drawn from the life, being near the poet's house at Grasmere."

—George G. Loane.

"We should turn to *Michael* where scenery characters and style form a perfect harmony of lines and tints that could not have existed without a secret process of assimilation. Lofty and bare, indeed is this pastoral. Few flowers grow on the heights where old Michael meant to bewild his sheepfold. The land is unadorned. It has no other features than the sheer lineaments of its sweeps and pastures or its steep rocks over which are spread by turns the naked sky and the winter mists. All this, together with the bracing air, you feel from the first to the last line, not less when the poet gives you the speech of his ancient 'statesman' or a glimpse of his stern mind, than when he paints the landscape itself. *Even as the scenery is composed of its essentials, so is the old man's character, and so his language*. In such passages there is not one word of description, and yet 'the

pastoral mountains' are constantly conjured up with their raw atmosphere, behind the discouraging shepherd. Every syllable he utters is their emanation."

—*Emile Legouis.*

Michael as a Pastoral Poem.

A pastoral is defined as "an artificial form of literature in which a pastoral background is given to the treatment of a subject, a rustic scene being chosen and the characters appearing as shepherds and shepherdesses."

The Greek idyll of Theocritus, Moschus and Bion, and the Latin *eclogue* of Virgil are the progenitors of the modern pastoral poem. The classical pastorals are artificial in tone and spirit. They were full of conventions; there neither character nor scene nor sentiment was real. They idealised the common shepherd life into a romance. *Michael* is not a 'pastoral' poem in the sense of classical pastorals. Wordsworth breaks new ground in pastoral poetry. The scene is an actual scene; the character is a real shepherd; the incident is 'some natural sorrow.....that has been and may be again.' Wordsworth has nothing to do with the convention—the artificial background and motive of the earlier pastoral poetry.

Background of the Poem.

The scene of the poem is laid in the mountain country of Cumberland, particularly of Greenhead Ghyll on the forest side of Grasmere. The whole story is laid in the setting of the beautiful Lake district with which Wordsworth was thoroughly acquainted. Michael is a typical dalesman of Cumbria with whom Wordsworth was familiar. These dalesmen were simple, hardworking, full of independence, home affection.

Moral Lessons of the Poem.

The poem teaches the following moral lessons—

1. Baneful influence of civilised life of the city. Country life led by the shepherds is one of simplicity, innocence and virtue, while city life is full of vice and artificiality. Tragedy results from the deviation from the path of virtue and simplicity. Luke rebels against the life of simplicity and thus brings himself and the whole family to ruin.

2. Intensity domestic love. "Men who do not wear fine clothes can feel deeply." Even the common shepherds are capable of domestic love. Love is the dominating motive of the poem. Love gives energy to life.

"There is a comfort in the strength of love.

"It will make a thing endurable, which else
Would overset the brain or break the heart."

3. Lesson of resolution and independence. Michael holds up the lesson of heroic fortitude. He goes through a series of calamities and endures them with indomitable courage and strength of mind. He never loses the balance of his mind. He stands on his own legs throughout his afflictions. He is too proud to seek for help from any of his neighbours.

4. Predominance of fate over human affairs. Michael in his old age builds up a fortune but suddenly clouds of misfortune mar his domestic happiness. Instead of selling half of his ancestral property he sends his son to a lucrative profession in London. But Fate wills otherwise. His son takes to an immoral life. We find there an old man retently pursued by Fate.

Conception of Nature in the Poem.

In *Michael* Wordsworth points out how Nature influenced him and how Nature shaped and moulded Michael's character. The poem partly traces the educative influence of Nature.

In *Michael* Wordsworth confesses that his first love was Nature and Man came much later. Wordsworth's love for Westmorland peasants and shepherds came from his love of Nature.

"It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spoke to me
Of shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved;—not verily
For their own sakes but for the fields and hills
Where was their occupation and abode."

Wordsworth points out also how his love of nature led to his love of man. The poet was interested in Michael because Michael had received so much of Nature by his

constant companionship with Nature. Michael was almost a part of Nature.

"And hence this tale, while I was yet a boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of Nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects, led me on to feel
For passions that were not my own and think.
On man the heart of man, and human life."

Nature gave her education to Michael. So Wordsworth writes

"And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
That the green valleys and the streams, and rocks,
Were things indifferent to the shepherd's thoughts,

Those fields, those hills—what could they less had laid?
Strong hold on his affections, were to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself."

Characters

Michael. Wordsworth writes, "I have attempted to give a picture of a man of strong mind and lively sensibilities agitated by two of the most powerful affections of the human heart—the paternal affection and the love of property, landed property, including the feelings of inheritance, home, and personal and family independence."

The keynote to Michael's character lies in his paternal affection and in his love of property.

His paternal affection is best seen in the parting scene between father and son. Michael says to Luke—

" My son.

Tomorrow thou wilt leave me, with full heart

And all thy life has been my daily joy."

Michael has been an affectionate, but not an indulgent father.

When Michael heard of Luke's moral downfall, he was deeply shocked but he was sustained by "the strength of

love." The pathos of the frustrated fatherly affection is concentrated in the two lines.

"Many and many a day hither they went,
And never lifted up a single stone."

His love of property springs from his attachment to hearth and home, to family and to the very soil of the land which has been in possession of the family. The estate is the fruit of the toil and industry of his ancestors. To Michael it has come as a sacred trust. He says, "These fields were burthened when they came to me." Up to his fortieth year he toiled before the land was free. The loss of his property would be the worst calamity that could happen to him. It would mean betraying the trust, handed down to him by his ancestors. Hence he sends his son to London to be set up in business,

Michael's industry was proverbial. When the storm was up, he had to be on the mountains, seeking and gathering his sheep, rescuing them from danger or accident. His work would not end when he returned home at night—he would work on odd jobs far into the night. He is a sturdy shepherd ever watchful of his flock. He has a keen, sagacious intelligence.

Michael possess a rugged strength of mind, reserve and dignity. He is a silent and strong man whose only delight is in his occupation as a shepherd. However deep and tender his affection, he does not express it in words (except on the occasion of his farewell.) His reserve conceals his tender and intense affection. He has a dignity and seriousness of manner; He seems to be one with the stern, rugged mountainous country of which he is a native—a true son of the soil. Nature has been his teacher.

Luke

Luke is presented to us as the prop of the family and hope of Michael in his old age. He receives the training for a shepherd's son. Armed with the shepherd's staff Luke would attend to the sheep but he was 'more often a hindrance than a help.' When he was ten years old, he used to accompany his father to the mountains. Luke proved a worthy son as hard-working and industrious as his father.

All the love and care of the parents are centred on Luke because he gives them a new interest in life.

When Michael decides to send Luke to London and brings him to the place where he is going to build the sheep fold, Luke is deeply moved by his father's words. As long as he remains in the pastoral atmosphere of homely simplicity he fulfils the fond expectations of his father. But as soon as he is taken out of that atmosphere, and he comes in touch with the civilised world, he succumbs to the baneful influence of civilised life and falls a prey to debauchery. He deviates from the path of virtue and brings ruin upon the whole family.

Luke presents a contrast with Michael. Michael is the type of simple pastoral life, while Luke represents the city life. Luke leads an unnatural and conventional life, he has none of his father's will and character to combat the temptations of city life.

Metre and Versification

The poem is written in blank verse, Each normal line has five iambic feet, with occasional trochaic variations, e. g.

Homely / and rude / I will / relate / the same.

Style of the Poem

The style of the Poem is admirably adapted to the subject matter of the poem. The style is a suitable vehicle for expressing naturally the most elementary feelings of men. The style is simple and unadorned and "is bare as the rugged mountains are." Mrs. Browning wrote of "the scriptural grandeur or simplicity in Michael." The language is the language of every-day life. There are no figures of speech, no artificial embellishments. As M. Arnold says, "Nature herself is compensated by the sublimity of feelings."

Michael is an illustration of Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction.

Paraphrase

Lines 1—21. *Scene of the story.*

If you leave the public way, and proceed up the noisy stream of Greenhead Ghyll, it will strike you that you are

going upward with toiling feet. And as you climb up the path, the mountains on whose sides sheep pasture tower up before you. But, be of good cheer, for round about that noisy stream the mountains have fallen back and left an unseen valley within. No human dwelling place is within view. Those who take the trouble of coming up to the point discover a few sheep, rocks and stones scattered about and kites flying high up in the air. It is indeed a picture of perfect loneliness. I should not have mentioned the valley except for one object which you may overlook as you pass by. By the side of the stream there is a regular pile of unshaped stones. A story attaches to that simple object. This story does not narrate any sensational incidents; yet it is one that may appeal to people gathered round the fire side or resting under the shadow of trees in summer.

Lines 21—39. *Wordsworth's love of nature. Reasons for his narrating the story.*

It was the first of those tales dealing with the simple and homely life of shepherds and dalesman. It drew my heart's affection to them. I loved them already, not because they were shepherds and dalesmen, but because they lived in close contact with Nature and nature objects, the fields and hills. They lived and worked in the constant presence of Nature. Even in my boyhood I cared little for books. I have felt that Nature and her objects can gently and imperceptibly influence the human mind. Thus my contact with Nature raised certain emotions in me which were above my year. I began to reflect over of course, in my imperfect and unsystematic way, man, his feelings and sentiments and his intimate relations with the rest of nature, I have two other reasons for relating this simple and homely story. First, it may be a source of delight to some simple-minded people leading natural lives and retaining natural feelings. Secondly, it may be a source of inspiration to those young poets in whom my spirit would be found when I am dead, and who would celebrate love of Nature in their poems.

Lines 49—61. *Michael and his occupation.*

In the woody parts of Grasmere Vale, there lived a shepherd named Michael. He was an old man, and yet strong in body and mind. All his life from his youth to his

old age he possessed remarkable strength. His mind was quick, alert, balanced and capable of doing every kind of business. In his own profession he was more alert than ordinary men. He was quicker in action and more attentive to the safety of his flock than other shepherds. So he had learnt to understand the nature of all minds, of storms of every description. And often, when other shepherds took no heed, he could catch the rumbling noise of the south wind, as if proceeding from under the earth. The sound resembled the distant notes of bag pipes in the high land hills. Hearing this sound Michael could at once know that a storm was coming, he could then think at once of the flock. He would say to himself, "The winds are up and there's a hard job for me, namely bringing together all my sheep." And, indeed, always the storm that compels a traveller to seek shelter, called Michael to the mountain heights, caught in a thick and blinding mist. Thus toiling, Michael served his life until he was eighty.

Lines 62—77. *Michael's love of nature.*

Therefore it is a grievous mistake to think that he did not love the green valleys and streams and rocks amidst which he lived. The fields were dear to him, because the free air which he breathed there made him cheerful. He loved the hills which he had so often climbed with firm steps. In fact, they were associated in his mind with many events which caused him hardship, or required either skill or courage. Sometimes these hills were the source of joy and sometimes of fear to him. Just as a book preserves the records of past events similarly the hills raised in his mind the memories of having saved the dumb sheep from falling into the ravine, or of having sheltered them during storms. In all these pious acts he had always his selfish but thoroughly honest motive of gain. A long residence amidst these fields and hills could not but have influenced him materially. They were objects of affection to him so that he felt a pleasurable yearning of instinctive love for them. The pleasure that he derived from these objects of Nature was the joy that he felt in living life itself.

Lines 78—109. *Michael's family and their industrious life.*

Michael was not a bachelor. His wife was a pleasant-looking woman, who had also grown old. Though she was twenty years younger than Michael, she led a very active life. She devoted herself to household duties. She had two old-fashioned wheels, the larger one for spinning wool, and the smaller one for spinning flax. Either of these wheels was always in use. The couple had but another member in the house. He was an only child, born to them when Michael counting his years began to think seriously that he was old, or as a shepherd will put it, he had one foot in the grave. This only son, with two fearless sheep dogs, who had proved their courage in many storms (one of them specially valued for his courage)—these made up all the members of the household. It may be truly said that they became proverbial for their ceaseless industry in Grasmere Vale. When at the close of the day, father and son returned home from their outdoor work, even then their work went on except for the hour they sat down to their supper. Their supper was spread on a clean table and consisted of pottage, skimmed milk and plenty of oaten cakes and plain home made cheese. But when the meal was over, Luke (for that was the name of the son) and his only father turned to such odd jobs as could be done by the fireside. Perhaps they would comb out wood for the house-mistress's (Michael's wife's) spindle, or mend some tools or implements such as sickle, flail or scythe tools for domestic use or for agricultural work.

Lines 110—139. *Michael's house—'The Evening Star'*

As soon as it grew dusk, the house wife hung a lamp down from the ceiling, by the border of the chimney, which as built in the country after an old end clumsy fashion, projected over a large space. The lamp was very old which had lasted more than all other similar lamps. It burned early in the evening and late at night. It existed still as an old companion of innumerable hours of the past. These hours, as they had glided from year to year, had never seen the couple either gay or cheerful; yet they worked steadily with aims and hopes, living as they did, an intense and active life. And now Luke had grown eighteen years old. Thereby the old lamp father and son sat, while the house mistress went on.

spinning till very late at night and in the silence of the night, the cottage would be filled with the sound of the spinning wheel seeming to be alive with the murmur of summer flies. This light was a noted object throughout the valley, and was a publicly known emblem of the industrious life the couple had led. As their cottage stood all by itself on a small elevation, it commanded a wide view, both in the north and south, away into Easedale and up to Dumail—Raise—it looked west to the village near the lake. And as the light regularly burned in the house, and was visible far and wide, the house was called the Evening Star both by the old and the young, who lived in the neighbourhood.

Lines 140—158. *Michael's affection for his son.*

Thus living together so many years, Michael, if he loved himself, must have loved his wife too. But the son of his old age was still dearer to his heart. Michael's fondness for his son, Luke, had less to do with the common fatherly instinct—the affections that naturally flows in the blood of all fathers, this fondness was more due to the fact that a child more than any other blessing that earthly life can bestow on a man; growing old, makes the father look forward to the future with hope, and fills him with uneasiness, when by the law of nature, these impulses are decaying. When Luke was a small baby, Michael had often done the service of a mother to him, not from mere amusement as fathers are accustomed to do, but forcing his patient mind to acts of tenderness. He had rocked his son's cradle as tenderly as a mother,

Lines 159—206. *Luke's training.*

Later on, before the boy put on knickers, he took him alone with him when he worked in the fields. Although he was of a stern unyielding temperament, he took the child along with him, because he did not want to keep him out of sight even for a single moment. While he sat on his shepherd's stool with a sheep with its legs tied stretched before him under the large oak-tree, he had the boy with him. The wonderful shade of the oak-tree which gave complete protection from the sun made Michael choose it as 'the clipping tree,' as it is known in the rustic language of the shepherds. While the two sat under the shade of the tree, with other

shepherds round them, looking merry, sometimes Michael would feel worried over the child playing mischievous franks with the sheep by catching at their legs or frightening them with his shouts while they were being clipped. Michael would at such times only direct his hiding looks on the boy merely to correct him.

When by the mercy of God the boy grew up a healthy lad, and was five years old with ruddy cheeks, Michael with his own hand cut a young tree from a winter bush. He ringed it with iron, and made it in all respect a shepherd's staff, and gave it to Luke. Armed with this little staff, Luke was often placed at a gate, or at a gap, to stop or to turn off the flock of sheep. Summoned to the duty of shepherd at too early an age, the lad would stand where his father would put him, and as you can easily guess, he would be sometimes helpful and sometimes he would be unhelpful. It was not after that he would receive praise from his father, though he would do all he could with his staff, or with his voice, his looks or his angry movements. But when Luke was ten years old and could stand the mountain storms, hard labour and long wearisome walk, he would accompany his father to the mountain heights. They were then as companions. It is needless to say that the objects of Nature that Michael loved before, became still dearer to him by association, that the interchange of affection between father and son gave a new light to the sun and a new music to the wind; and that as the result of it the old man's heart seemed to be rejuvenated. So the boy grew up in his father's presence, and when he was eighteen years old, he was a source of comfort and daily hope to his father.

Linee 207—255. *Crisis in Michael's affairs.*

Thus the family-lived on in comfort and hope from day to day, till a sad news came to Michael's ear. Long ago Michael had legally bound himself as a security for a debt incurred by his nephew, who had a large asset and had been leading an industrious life. Unexpected calamities had suddenly overtaken him, and now old Michael was called upon to pay off the debt which his nephew failed to do. It was a hard penalty for Michael, because the loss came up to a little less than half of his entire landed property. This un-

expected call to meet the claim, when he first heard of it, crushed all hope in him, and left the old man a prey to absolute despair. But Michael regained sufficient strength of will to face the trouble; it seemed to him that the only means to meet the claim was to sell part of his ancestral lands. This was his first determination. Michael thought over the matter again, and despair filled him.

Two evenings after he had heard the news, he addressed himself to his wife, "Isabel, I have been working more than seventy years and we have lived in goodness and honesty, enjoying the favour of god. Yet if those fields of ours were to pass into the hands of a stranger I could not sleep in peace in my grave. We have very hard luck. The son himself has not been more industrious than I. At last I find that by my foolishness I have brought trouble upon my family. If my nephew were faithless to me, then he was an evil man, and he acted wrongly to make me the victim. If he were not faithless, he might have chosen some other person for his surety and there are thousands weal their than myself, to whom this loss could not cause so much sorrow, I forgive him. But what is the good of talking thus? When I started the talk, my object was to suggest a remedy and good hope. Luke, to whom we are so deeply attached, must go from us, Isabel. I must keep the land, and it must be released. It must go down to my son, as free as the wind that blow over it. We have, you know, another relation. He will help me in my trouble. He is a thriving man in business. Luke shall go to him. With the assistance of my relation and by means of his frugal habit Luke will soon be able to earn money and to redeem the lost property. Then Luke can return to us. If he stays here, he cannot possibly help us. In a place where every one's poor, one can not earn much.

Lines 255—303. *Isabel's thoughts about Michael's Proposal.*

Michael concluded his speech at this point. Isabel sat silent and thinking. She began to think how long ago there was a poor boy Richard Bateman by name, who was brought up at the expense of the parish. People made a collection of charity at the church doos and with it brought him a basketful of hawker's goods. The boy worked his way up to

London by means of hawking. There he found an employer who out of many other boys selected him to supervise his goods beyond the seas. There Richard Bateman grew very rich, and left on his death estates and sums of money as gifts to the poor. Also at his birth place he built a private place of worship, the floor of which he paved with marbles he had sent from abroad. These thoughts and many others of a similar nature occurred to Isabel. Her face shone with joy. Michael was glad to see the look of joy on his life's face, and thus continued, "Well, Isabell ! I have been deeply pondering on this plan for Luke these two days. There is still much more left than we have lost. We have enough to provide for our subsistence. Oh ! if I had been younger ! But this hope that Luke would be able to make good the loss, is a reasonable hope, and may give us the necessary degree of comfort. Make ready Luke's best clothes, buy for him more of the best things, and let us send him forth tomorrow, on the next day, or to night. If it were possible, the boy should go tonight.

At this point Michael stopped, and with a free and cheerful heart, went forth to the fields. Without any rest continually for five days, and all day long, Isabel worked most diligently to prepare all things necessary for the journey for her son. When Sunday came, Isabel was glad to stop in her work, for sleeping by Michael's side, for the last two nights she had heard him mutter in his sleep, and had seen him sleep restlessly. And when he rose in the morning, she could see that Michael had a look of despair. That day at noon Isabel said to Luke while they were sitting alone at the door. "You must not go; we have no other child than you to lose, none else to remember—do not leave us, your father will die." The young man replied in a cheerful and confident voice. And Isabel when she had expressed her fears to Luke, regained courage and hope. That evening she prepared the best food she could make and all together sat at the table in a joyous mood.

Lines 304—321. *Letter from Michael's relative.*

Isabel was as busy even when day dawned. And the following week the house seemed as cheerful as a grove in spring. At last the expected letter arrived from the Michael's

kinsman. He promised to do all he could for Luke, and requested that Luke might be sent at once. The letter was read over ten times or more. Isabel took it and showed it to all his neighbours. Nobody had a prouder heart at that time in England than Luke. When Isabel had returned home Michael said, "He shall depart tomorrow." Isabel at first objected saying that things that Luke needed could not be got ready within so little time at her disposal. But at last she agreed, and Michael had peace of mind.

Line 322—382. *Covenant between father and son.*

In that deep vally Michael had intended to construct a sheep fold near the noisy stream of greenhead Ghyll. Before the news of his sad loss had reached his ear. Michael had, for this purpose gathered up a pile of stones. They lay, heaped together by the border of the stream, ready to be used in the construction of the sheepfold, Michael took Luke to this place that evening. When reached it, Michael stopped and thus addressed Luke, "My son, tomorrow you are going away from me. With a heart full of a mixed feeling of joy and sorrow, I look upon you, I entertained hopes of you before you were born. All the days of your life have been a source of joy to me. I will tell you a little of the story of my life and what part you played in it. It will do good to you when you are away from me. I may have to tell you of things that you cannot possibly understand. When you were first born—as it may often happen to newborn infants—you slept away two days, and your father prayed for you and blessed you fervently. As days glided by, my love for you went on increasing. No sounds could I imagine to be sweeter than your inarticulate speech (the infant's prattle) by the fireside, when you sucked at your mother's breast. Month passed after month, and my life was an open-air life in the fields or on the mountains; otherwise I think your father himself would have reared you. But we were companions at Hay, Luke; among these hills as you do know well, we have played together—the old and the young; nor did I fail to provide for you any delight or amusement that a boy may look for." Luke had no feminine weakness; but at these words he wept cloud,

Michael took his hand and continued, "Do not take it so

sore, I should not have spoken of these things. To the best of my power I have behaved as a good and affectionate father—and in this matter I but discharge a debt I owe to my parents; for though I am old beyond the average age of man, I do still remember my parents who loved me in my youth. Both of them lie buried in the same grave. Here they lived just as their forefathers had done. And when the end came, they were not unwilling to repose in the household grave. My earnest desire is that you should follow their example. But it is so long ago, my son, and I see what little I have gained after sixty years' toil. These fields were encumbered with debts when they came to my possession. Before I was forty years old, I was the master only of half the estate. I put in years of increasing toil; and God favoured me for my industry, and land was free till it was encumbered again three weeks ago by losses due to my standlmg security. I cannot bear the idea that the land should go into another man's possession. May God forgive me if I have made a wrong decision for you, but it seems to be for the interest of both that you should go to London.

Lines 383-430. Covenant between father and son continued.

At this the old man stopped; then after a little pause, pointing to the stones that lay heaped together, he continued: "This building of the sheepfold was a work for both of us; but now that you are going away, my son, I shall have to carry it only myself. But, lay one stone as the foundation of the sheepfold. Here lay it for my sake, Luke, with your own hands. My boy, be of good cheer—we both may live to see the return of property. At eighty-four I am still strong and healthy. Fulfil but your part of your duty. I will do mine. I will resume many tasks that were left over to you. I will all by myself climb the mountain heights and work in the midst of storms. I shall have to go on working all by myself as I used to do before you were born. May god bless you, my boy. These two weeks your heart is astir with many hopes. It is but natural that you should look forward to future with hope. I know that you had not the least desire to leave me, Luke. It is the bonds of deep love that bind you to me. When you are gone, my life would be a blank. But I am

forgetting the purpose for which I have brought you here. Lay now the foundation-stone as I entreated you. In subsequent time, when you are gone away, if you are tempted by evil company in London, think of me my son, and of this moment; cast your thoughts back to this moment, and God will give you strength and courage. Whatever may assail you or try to lure you astray. Luke, I pray you remember the example of your forefathers. They led innocent and virtuous, they devoted themselves to good deeds. Now farewell! When you return you will see here a structure that does not exist now. Let this be a sacred pact between us. But whatever may be your destiny in the future, I shall love to the end, and your memory will go with me to the grave."

Michael concluded his speech, Luke bent down, and in compliance with his father's request, laid the foundation-stone of the sheep-fold. At this sight the old man could no more restrain his grief. Michael clasped his son to his bosom. He kissed Luke and wept. They returned together to the house. That house wore an air of stillness until nightfall. The boy started on his journey the next morning. When he had gained the public high way, he assumed a confident air. All the neighbours, as he passed their doors, came out to give him their good wishes and their partings, which powered upon him until he was out of the village.

Lines 431—447. *Luke in London.*

A report came from their relative in London that Luke was doing well in business. The boy also wrote letters couched in loving words describing the wonderful things of London. Isabel declared that they were the prettiest letters ever seen. Both parents read them with delight. Thus many months passed. Michael had resumed his work with a confident and cheerful heart. And when he could find any spare time he proceeded to the valley and constructed the sheepfold. In the meantime Luke began to neglect his duty. At last Luke abandoned himself to sin and vice in the city of London. He earned for him disgrace and shame. At last he was compelled to seek safety by the migrating to a country beyond the sea.

Lines 448—482. *Conclusion.*

One may draw upon the strength of love in one's misfortunes. It will enable one to bear misfortunes; otherwise the trouble might unbalance reason or break the heart. I have talked with more than one who remembers the old man, Michael, and how he went about his work years after he had heard the news of his son's disgrace and flight. Michael's physical constitution from youth to age was unusually strong. He went along the rocks, and still viewed the sun and cloud and listened to the murmuring sound of the wind. He still attended to his sheep as before, and the fragment of land, still left to him. Now and then Michael would go to that deep valley to build the sheepfold so much needed by his flock. The pity which was felt by every heart for the old man is still within living memory. Michael was heart-broken with grief. It is believed by all that often and again he went to the valley and never raised a single stone (He had not the heart to work). Sometimes Michael would be seen sitting alone by the sheepfold, or attended by his faithful dog, then old, lying at his feet beside him. For as long a period as seven years, he worked at the sheepfold occasionally. It was not yet finished when Michael died. In three years or little more Isabel followed her husband to the graves. At her death the estate was sold, and passed into stranger's hand. The cottage called the Evening star has disappeared. The ground on which it stood, is now under cultivation. The face of the neighbourhood has been wholly changed. Yet the oak that grew beside the door of the cottage, is still standing; and the ruins of unfinished sheepfold may still be seen by the noisy stream of Greenhead Ghyll.

Notes and Explanations.

Lines 1—21. *Gist:* A story is associated with a heap of stones in Greenhead Ghyll.

Public way—road commonly used by the public. Up—towards the source. Tumultuous brook—noisy stream rushing impetuously. Greenhead Ghyll—a wooded valley in the lake district. The word 'Ghyll' means the deep furrow a stream has developed in a hill side, a short and steep valley with a stream running through it. Upright—steep, perpen-

dicular. Your feet.....struggle—you will have to toil hard in climbing the steep road before you reach the valley. Bold—steep. Ascent—way by which one may ascend; slope. Pastoral mountains—mountains where shepherds tend their flocks of sheep. Front you—obstruct your path. Courage—be of good cheer. Boisterous brook—wild, noisy stream. Opened out—parted. Hidden—not seen from outside. Habitation—human dwelling-place. A few sheep—a few sheep pasturing on the mountain sides. Sailing—flying. Utter solitude—absolute loneliness. Dell—valley. But—except. Might see.....not—though you might see it, you might pay no attention to it. Pass by—overlook as being too commonplace a thing. Straggling—scattered, lying about here and there. Unhewn—rough and unshaped. Apertains—belongs. Unenriched—not adorned. Strange events—sensational or remarkable incidents. Simple object commonplace thing, named, the heap of stones. Yet not unfile.....fireside—a story that will appeal to the people gathered round the fireside on an evening. For the summer shade—a story which will interest people resting under the shadow of trees in summer

Explanation—And to that..... summer shade. Pointing out the help of stones Wordsworth says that it is the theme of his story. The unfinished sheepfold tells the domestic tragedy that befall Michael. The poet says that his tale is a story of the ordinary events of a shepherd family, it would be interesting to the simple folk sitting round the evening fire or gathered under the shade of a tree. It is not a story of thrilling adventures or sensational incidents.

Lines 22—39 Gist: Wordsworth tells the story of the simple life of shepherds who live in close touch with nature. He tells the story for the delight of a few natural hearts as well as for the benefit of future poets.

Spake—archaic for 'spoke.'

Explanation.—Not verily.....abode. Wordsworth loved the shepherds not so much for their simple and unconventional life as for the natural surroundings, i. e. mountains and valley in which they lived. The poet was primarily interested in nature and secondarily in

men who were open to the influence of nature. *Careless of books*—Wordsworth in his school days were less fond of book than of the open-air life of nature. In his poem 'The Tables Turned' he wrote—

"Up ! Up ! my friend quit your books;
Or surely you'll grow double".

Power of nature—Wordsworth was a worshipper of nature; he was greatly influenced by nature's teachings. By the gentle agency—what Wordsworth calls 'nature's ministry'. **Led me on**—the story of a shepherd who lived in close companionship with nature, led Wordsworth from the contemplation of nature to the contemplation of men. **Passions not my own**—to understand and sympathise with the feelings of others. **At random**—at irregular intervals; casually. **On Man**—Wordsworth looked on man as part and parcel of nature. **Imperfectly**—vaguely; unsystematically.

Explanation.—And hence this tale.....life. Wordsworth explains why the story of Michael interested him. It was such tales of common men (shepherds) and their joys and sorrows that developed his love for man. At first nature was all in all to him. Even when a boy Wordsworth neglected his books, and came under the educative influence of nature. By loving nature Wordsworth learnt to love man. The tale of Michael stirred in Wordsworth's heart, sympathy for human joys and sorrows (other than his own). It made Wordsworth—contemplate life and human destiny though in a vague and imperfect manner.

History—narrative, real story. Homely and rude—'unenriched with strange events'; simple, not artificial; artless. **Natural hearts**—(1) simple and uncorrupted hearts (2) hearts in tune with nature, open to the influence of nature. **Writ fond feeling**—with a greater desire. Will be my second self—will take up any place or will be my successors. **Gone**—dead

Explanation.—Therefore, although.....am gone.

Wordsworth here gives subsidiary reasons for relating the story of Michael. First, the story may be a source of delight to those simple-minded people who lead natural and unsoph-

histicated life. Secondly, it may be a source of inspiration to those young poets who might follow in his footsteps and imbibe his love of nature.

Lines 40—61. *Gist*.—Michael was strong in body and mind, an industrious shepherd and could make weather forecasts.

Grasmere Vale—the most beautiful part of the Lake district is the neighbourhood of Grasmere in the west of Westmoreland. Stout of heart—bold and fearless. Strong of limb—physically strong. Unusual—extraordinary. Keen—sharp; intelligent. Intense—eager, ardent, sensitive. Frugal economical. Apt for all affairs—up to all kinds of business, capable of dealing with all tasks. Calling—occupation. Prompt—quick in action. Watchful—alert, attentive to the safety of the sheep. Had learnt.....winds—he had become weather-wise, i. e., from the sound of the various kinds of wind he could understand what sort of storm was coming. Blasts—violent storms. Of every tone—he could understand by the sound whether a storm would be violent or mild. Heeded not—paid no attention. South—south-wind. Subterraneous—under the earth.

Explanation.—He heard..... hills. The south wind blowing in the valley made a howling sound, yet it seemed musical to Michael. Michael as a lover of nature could perceive beauty even in her fearful aspects. The howling of the wind seemed as charming to Michael as the music played on bag-pipe by the Highlanders.

Bag pipers—those who play on bag pipes. A bag-pipe is a musical wind-instrument. Highland hills—mountainous parts of Scotland. At such warning—at the approach of the south wind, which might involve the sheep in danger. Bethought him—thought of the sheep pasturing on the mountain-sides when he caught the rumbling noise of the south wind,

Explanation.—The winds.....me. When the south wind approached Michael thought that the winds were conspiring against him to make him work more. When the storm blew, a shepherd has to exert a good deal in gathering his scattered sheep.

The storm.....shelter—the storm being accompanied by a blinding mist proves dangerous to men and to sheep scattered on the mountain-sides. So a traveller is compelled to seek shelter. But Michael would brave the storm and go out to the rescue of the sheep. Summoned—called. Amid the heart of—in the thick of; right in the middle of. That cameheights—Michael remained on the mountain tops as long as the mist lasted. He did not mind the storm or fog.

Explanation.—And truly.....the heights. These lines describe the habits of Michael, as a shepherd. Michael could read the weather accurately. When the storm would be violent, all people would seek shelter. But Michael was not the man to neglect his sheep. He would walk out careless of the storm, and sometimes would be on the mountain tops. Mist after mist would come and envelop him and then pass away. But heedless of the storm and the mist, Michael would be working on. He was a dutiful shepherd.

Lines 62—77. *Gist.*—Life-long association with the objects of nature had made them dear to Michael's heart.

Grossly—absolutely. Errs—is mistaken. Green—green with trees. Indifferentthoughts—not interesting the sphere.

Explanation.—And grossly.....thought. Michael was a dutiful shepherd. He moved in the valleys by streams and on hills, tending his flock of sheep. But that Michael had no eye for the beauty of nature blindly. It would be a mistake to think that Michael was callous to the influence of nature. He was keenly sensitive to Nature's beauty

Common air—free mountain air which could be equally enjoyed by all the people of the valley. Vigorous—brisk. Impressed—stamped; were associated with.

Explanation.—Which.....fear. The hills were quite familiar to Michael. Every inch of the ground was associated in his mind with some incidents of physical suffering or skill. Sometimes he had felt joy in climbing the mountains, and sometimes felt a great fear, as instance, when his sheep went astray.

Explanation.—Which like a book..... ..honourable gain. Just as books are a record of past events, similarly, the hills were for Michael a record of the many occasions on which he had saved the sheep from falling down into the valley below, and had put them under some shelter. He had saved the life of the dumb animals, not only because he felt from them but because they were the wealth to him; the source of his honest livelihood. His native may have been selfish, but it was thoroughly honourable.

Linking to—associating with. Pleasurable feeling—feeling of joy. Of blind love—prompted by instinctive love. What could.....less—i. e., It was natural that these fields and hills should have a strong hold on Michael's affections. The pleasure.....itself—The love which man bears for his life is instinctive, blind unreasoning attachment. Similarly blind was Michael's attachment for the natural scenery which was associated with his life's activities.

Explanation.—These field.....itself. Wordsworth here indicates how Michael came to love Nature. Michael was familiar with the hills and fields with which were associated memories of many incidents of the past, such as how he rescued the sheep in storm and mist. From being the scene of his constant activities these hills and fields became dear to Michael's heart. But it was a blind love, a love based on instinct, not on reason. Man loves his life because he has lived it. In course of years one forms an attachment to life—an attachment blind but strong. Michael's love for Nature was similar, Michael loved the hills and the fields, because they were associated with his life's activities.

This may be interpreted in another way. Michael felt his life joyous because of his love for natural objects. This brings out Wordsworth's definition of life, namely, "Life is energy of love, divine or human"

Lines 78—109.—Gist. Michael's family consisted of his wife, his only son, and two dogs. They led a life of simplicity and untiring industry.

Singleness—lonely life of a bachelor. Help mate—wife. Comely—handsome. Matron—a woman of mature years.

Stirring life—active and busy life. Whose heart.....house—she was intensely devoted to her household duties. Wheels of antique from—old-fashioned spring wheels Flax—a plant from the fibres of which linen is made; here the fibres of the plant, which were spun and woven. If one wheel.....work—She was at work with one or other of her spinning wheels, This shows how busy she was. Head rest—was not in use. Pair—couple, *i. e.*, Michael and his wife. Inmate—member. Telling over—counting. Deem—consider. In shepherd's pharse—in the language of the shepherds. With one foot.....grave—being near death. Sheep dogs—large species of dogs meant for guardidg the sheep. Tried—whose courage and endurance have been tested. Of inestimable worth—very highly useful. Made.....household—constructed the whole family of Michael.

Explanation.—I am truly.....industry. Wordsworth describes Michael's family. Michael's wife led a very active and industrious life. Father and son also were equally industrious. They would be busy either carding wool or mending some implements in the evening after their days work out of doors. Hence, the whole family became noted and proverbial for their industry in the neighbourhood. They were mentioned and admired as the most industrious people in Grasmere Vale.

Their labour did not cease—They worked on. Supper-board—table for supper. Mess—portion of liquid or happy food. Pottage—soup. Mess of Pottage—oat meal porridge. Skimmed milk—milk from which cream has been taken away. Piled—heaped up. Oaten cakes—thin, brittle cakes made of oat meal. Cheese—a food made from the curd or milk pressed firm. Betook.....to—had recourse to. Convenient work—work that can be conveniently carried on by the fire side. Card—comb; a wire-brush or iron-toothed instrument for combing or putting in order the fibres of flax, wool, cotton etc. Sickle—reaping hook. Flail thrashing implement. Scythe—mowing and reaping instrument. Spindle—rod or pin of a spinning wheel on which the thread is twisted and wound. Implement etc.—tool for domestic or agricultural purpose.

Line 110—139.—*Gist.* A lamp hung from the ceiling

burnt far into the sight. The light, the symbol of their industrious life, was visible from a great distance. The people called the house Evening star.

Ancient—old-fashioned. Uncouth—unshapely; odd. Country style—plan followed in the country places. Huge—enormous. Black—because covered with soot. Projection—overhanging part. Overbrowed—overlooked overhung. As the light.....dim—as soon as the sun had set. House wife—house mistress, Michael's wife. Aged utensil—a very old lamp. Which had.....kind—which had lasted and been used more than any other lamp. Surviving comrade etc.—(1) The lamp had been a companion of innumerable hours—of how many hours no one had ever counted; the hours had sped away but the lamp was still there. (2) Many old things had been broken or destroyed, but the old lamp still remained. Which—refers to 'uncounted hours' Going from year to.....hopes—yet their minds were occupied with aims or purpose and hopes of the future, without which aims or purpose and hopes of the future, without which man could not work.

Explanation.—Surviving comrade.....industry. For years together the lamp has burnt by the side of the chimney. Many other utensils have been broken. But this lamp remains a faithful companion through years. During this passage of time Michael and his wife did not feel any change in their outlook of life, their only aim being earnest work for which they lived. They were neither gay nor cheerful. They were serious-minded persons. Day in and day out they had lived the same life—an active and industrious life. They had never been cheerful but they worked for definite aims or purposes; in their hearts they cherished hopes of the future. Thus they could work steadily.

Sate—archaic for 'sat.' Plied—went on doing. Piculiar work—spinning. Silent hours—quiet time of the night. Murmur—refers to the buzzing sound of the spinning wheel. Sound of summer flies—humming of the flies in summer. Public symbol—the external sign by which people could know their inner life.

Explanation.—The light was.....had lived. Michael and his wife were a hard-working couple. When

the day's work was done, they would light an old lamp and work on far into the night. The light of this lamp could be seen from a great distance. People living in the neighbourhood saw this light, and they understood that Michael and his wife were at their work. The lamp then became a sign of the industrious life and frugal habits of Michael and his wife.

Thrifty—frugal. **A plot of rising ground**—an elevation. **Single**—there was no other cottage nearby. **Large prospect**—wide view. **Easedale**—an island in the Firth of Lorn, west of Scotland. **Dummail Raise**—a mountain pass in the Lake District on the borders of Westmoreland and Cumberland. **Limits**—boundary. **Lake**—Grasmere Lake.

Explanation—And from this.....Evening star. The lamp of Michael's cottage exactly resembled the Evening star. The lamp burnt regularly like the Evening star, and appeared exactly at the same hour as the evening star. It was seen high up almost in the sky by the dwellers of the valley, who not naturally mistook it to be a star. As there was no other cottage light near by, the illusion was natural. So the name 'Evening star' was quite justified.

Lines 140—158.—**Gist.** Michael took great care of Luke, the child of his old age.

Through.....years—i. e., for so many years. **Needs**—necessarily. **Thus living**.....help-mate—Michael could not but have loved his wife who was a constant helper of his during the many years of his life. **Instinctive tenderness**—tender affection for the son that springs of itself in the father's heart. **Fond spirit**—feeling of attachment to the son. **Blindly**—instinctive. **Works**—instinctive. **Declining men**—men who are growing old. **Forward-looking thoughts**—thoughts of the future. **Stirrings of inquietude**—feelings of uneasiness.

Explanation.—But to Michael's heart.....fail. Michael loved his wife but he loved his son Luke more dearly still. This love was not the ordinary instinctive love which a father usually has for his son. Luke was to Michael more than is that a son usually is to his father. Luke was the son of Michael's old age. In old age our senses and

sensibilities become dulled; hope dies out and no longer have any fears or anxieties because life itself ceases to have any interest. But if in this old age a son is born to a man, his hopes and expectations revive; his anxieties return: his faculties and sensibilities are sharpened again; his life gathers a new interest. Thus Michael found a new interest in life with the birth of Luke. Luke's birth gave a fresh lease of life to Michael; it stirred up hopeful feelings about the future and some uneasiness also about the care that he had to bestow upon the child.

Exceeding—excessive; great. Bare—archaic for 'bore.' His heart.....joy—All the affection of his heart was centred in his son; and Luke was the joy of his heart. Female service—service that a mother would do to the baby. Pastime—amusement. Use—custom Enforced—compelled.

Explanation.—Not alone.....tenderness. Michael nurses his son like his mother, not simply for the sake of amusement, as is generally done by fathers, but because by dint of his patience compelled his mind to such tender and gentle duties. He had patiently trained his heart so as to be able to do such affectionate deeds as looking after the baby.

With.....hand—with all the tenderness of a mother.

Lines 159—206.—Gist. Even when Luke was a baby Michael would always keep him in his sight while working in the field. When Luke was five years old, he assisted Michael in keeping the sheep. At ten the boy would accompany his father to the mountain-height.

Boy's attire—drese worn by boys, known as knickers. Ere—before. Albeit—although. Stern—strict, enforcing discipline, not indulgent. Unbending—reserved in speech and manners. Young-one—Luke, Wrought—worked. Fettered sheep—sheep with its legs tied. Stood single—it was the only tree growing near the cottage. Matchless depth of shade—incomparable shade yielded by the oak. Shearer—one who removes wool from the body of a sheep by a pair of shears. Covert—shelter; which gave protection from the rays of the sun. Thence—because of the use to which the oak was put.

Rustic dialect—language of the village people. Clipping tree—so called because the tree is associated with the shearing of sheep. "Clipping is the word used in the north of England for shearing"—(*Wordsworth*). Earnest—eager for shearing. Blithe—glad. Exercise his heart—worry his heart. Fond correction—mildly and affectionately correcting the fault of his son. Reproof—rebuke. Bestowed upon—directed at. Scared—frightened. Beneath the shears—under the chipper, i. e., while their wool was being cut. By heaven's grace—by the mercy of God. Carried.....roses—had a ruddy glow, that is, the bloom of health on them. That were.....old—For the first five years Luke had rosy cheeks. Coppice—under wood growing under a big tree. Sapling—a tender branch. Hooped—put iron rings round it. Throughout—exactly. In all due requisites—in all essential aspects. Perfect shepherd staff—looking exactly like the crook of a shepherd. Where with equipped—armed with which. At gate—at the gate of the sheeptold, so that none could go out. Watch man—watcher of the sheep. Stem—check the sheep from going out of the gate of the sheep fold. Turn the flock—drive away the sheep from one direction to another. To his office.....called—He was asked to do the duties of a shepherd before his proper age. Urchin—rustic boy. Divine—think. Something.....help—neither of help to him nor an obstacle to his work. Hire of praise—wages or reward in the form of praise. Nought—nothing. Threatening gestures—waving of the staff or arms or any other movement of the body to strike terror into the sheep.

Explanation.—And to his office.....perform, When Luke was five years old Michael made a little shepherd's 'staff' for him. Luke was asked to discharge the duties of a shepherd when he was rather too young. Luke tried to imitate the duties of a shepherd perfectly. He would try to keep the flock of sheep under control with the help of the staff. But being a mere child he failed to manage the sheep. He however did all he could do. He would cast angry looks at the sheep; he would shout at them; he would charge them with his staff. But he was often unable to control the sheep. He thus proved partly helpful and partly obstructive to the work of his father. So he did not always

receive praise from his father Michael.

Mountain blasts—furious storms of the mountains. *Toil*—physical labour. *Length of weary ways*—long and wearisome climbing of the mountains. *Why should I relate etc.*—The interrogative sentence is an emphatic way of stating that all the objects which Michael loved before appeared dearer because of the associations of these objects with their son. *Emanations*—(1) sentiments of love for the father, which flowed from the boy (2) affections or sensibilities which had their source in the sun. Note that their love was reciprocal. *Things which.....wind*—(1) The sentiments of love were as essential, dear and natural to him as the light is to the sun or as the musical sound is to the wind (2) These sentiments made the sun brighter and the wind musical. *Born again*—The old man's heart seemed to have been revived by new hopes and desires.

Explanation.—*Why should I.....again* Wordsworth points out how the birth of a son in old age deepened the love of Nature in Michael, and revived hope in his heart. The objects of Nature which Michael had loved before became dearer still to his heart, because they were associated with his son's companionship. Michael felt joy in the company of his son. His son's love for him also gave him joy. With this new joy in his heart he looked upon Nature and so loved Nature more dearly than before. Thus the sun seemed to Michael more brilliant than ever and the wind more musical. The old man's heart began to be filled with new joy and hopes.

Lines 207-255.—Michael stood as a surety for his nephew, but as the latter failed to pay money, he had to sell part of his ancestral property. He decided to send Luke to London to earn and buy back the property.

Distressful tidings—sad news. *Bound in surety*—entered into a bond of security, promising to pay off the debt of his nephew. *Ample means*—considerable wealth. *Unforeseen*—unexpected. *Pressed upon him*—overwhelmed him. *Summoned*—called by the court. *Discharge the forfeiture*—pay the penalty for the breach of contract. *Grievous*—hard, because Michael was a poor man and had no money to pay off the debt. *Little less... ..substance*—The penalty would

mean the loss of almost half his entire property. *Unlooked for claim*—unexpected and sudden demands upon his estate. *At the first hearing*—when he first heard the news. *Took more hope etc.*—made him feel so hopeless about his future as no man ever felt.

Explanation.—*This unlooked for.....lost.*

Michael was called upon to face a crisis; Michael had long ago entered into a bond of security for his nephew. His nephew was doing well in business at the time, and had plenty of money. Naturally Michael thought that he ran no risk in standing surety for him. But his nephew suffered heavy losses in business. So Michael was called upon to fulfil his pledge, and pay off the debts of his nephew. To do so Michael would lose half his property. This was a great shock to Michael, and the shock was greater because he was old. Michael could never have believed that an old man like himself would have been so much in despair.

Armed with strength—regained his mental balance or strength of will. Fortitude is the keynote of Michael's character. *Look his trouble etc.*—to boldly meet the calamity. *Sole source*—only remedy for the trouble. *Patrimonial fields*—landed property inherited from ancestors. *Resolve*—determination. *In the open sunshine of god's love*—enjoying the favour and grace of God. God's love was showered on him as freely and as literally as the sun showers its light on the earth. *I could.....grace*—My spirit would have no peace after my death. *Our lot is hard lot*—we are doomed to a life of hardship.

Explanation.—*The sun.....I.* The sun rises every morning exactly at the same time and plods his weary way through the sky all day long. So the sun is taken to be an example of diligence. Michael says that he had been working harder than the sun.

I have.....family—I had been befooled by my nephew and looked upon as a fool by the family for having stood security for another's debt.

Explanation.—*An evil man.....sorrow.* Michael had stood security for his nephew's debt, but he was now called upon to pay off the debt himself. His nephew

might have been deliberately dishonest; if he were not dishonest, then Michael could not reasonably blame him. Yet the loss was too great for Michael to bear. To people richer than Michael the loss would have meant nothing. So Michael's nephew would have done better by making some richer man his security.

I forgive Jim—Michael forgives his nephew in the belief that he has been honest. Michael is a true Christian, for forgiveness is Christian charity. *But it is.....talk thus*—It is useless to have against my nephew as the fault is mine, and I should only curse my fate. *Began*—began taking to you. *Remedies*—plans for getting out of trouble. *Of cheerful hope*—of means which would bring back hope and cheerfulness to us. (Note the optimism of Michael).

Explanation.—*Our Luke.....over it.* Michael speaks of his final decision to Luke. Luke should be set up in business in London, with the assistance of a kinsman, and Luke's earnings would make good Michael's present loss, Michael is determined to keep the entire land for the family. So he would make the land free or unencumbered from a stranger's claim upon it. He would make the land as free as the wind that blows, in the interest of his son. *Our Luke*—Luke of whom we are passionately fond.

Thriving trade—prospering in business. *His own thrift*—his own thrifty way of living.

So far Luke was living economically like his father. It is the contagion of city life that makes him extravagant.

Repair—Make good.

Explanation. *If he stay.....gained?*—Michael says that there is no other way of getting out of their present trouble than sending Luke to London and setting him up in business. In the village every one is a shepherd and therefore no prosperous business is possible without going out of the village.

Lines 256—303. Isabel thought of a parish-boy who had become rich through business. Michael asked Isabel to make new clothes for Luke. Both the parents felt an anguish at the prospect of separation from their son. But Luke chased away their fears with re-assuring words.

Paused—stopped. Looking back.....times—recalling things of the past. Parish-boy—a boy maintained by Public Charity: or rather from the poor rate levied on a parish (a district for administrative purposes). Gathering—collection of money. Generally after the church service is over some member of the church stands at the door with a hat in his hand in which everyone puts in some money according to his means. This constitutes the charity fund. Where with—with the money collected. Pedlar's ware's—various nicnaces like tape, safety pins, collar studs, small articles of domestic use, with which a hawker goes about. Many—many candidates in many boys who acted as apprentice under him. Trusty—trustworthy. Overlook—supervise. Merchandise—goods for sale. Beyond the seas—i. e., in some country beyond the seas. Wondrous rich—wonderfully rich. Monies—cash. Estates—landed property. Built a chapel—as a means of showing his gratitude to God, who sent him fortune. "The story alluded to here is well-known in the country. The chapel is called Ings chapel" (Wordsworth.) Floored—whose floor was paved. Of like sort—i. e., of a hopeful nature. Brightened—looked joyful.

Explanation.—These thoughts.....brightened. When Isabel heard that her dear son Luke would go to London to earn money, she began to dream of a glorious Future for Luke. She remembered one Richard Bateman, a poor boy, who once left his village to earn money in a city, and at last became rich. Isabel dreamt that Luke also might become rich in a similar manner. So she did not weep at the prospect of her son's leaving home. She was rather happy.

Resumed—began to task again. Scheme—plan for Luke. Explanation.—This scheme.....yet. Michael told his wife Isabel that his plan was to send Luke to London and set him up in business under a kinsman. He added in a more confident tone that he had thought over the plan for two days. The plan had been sustaining him just as meat and drink sustain the body. Michael assured his wife that what they had lost was far less than what still remained to him. Michael meant to say that even if the worst came to the worst and they had to sell half their property, they would have enough left to live upon. Luke would earn enough money to buy

back the lost ancestral estates.

We have enough.....younger—Michael means that if he had been younger, he himself would have made up the loss. *This hope.....hope*—the hope that Luke being set up in business in London would be able by his earnings to make good their loss. This hope would sustain them. It was quite a reasonable hope. *Of the best*—the dress of Luke would be made out of the best cloth. *Tomorrow.....to night*—Note how Michael gets enthusiastic over his plan for Luke when he thinks Isabel also supports it. *If he could go*—If the preparations for his journey could be completed today. *With a light heart*—with a heart relieved of the anxiety which had been weighing on his heart. *Restless*—busy. *Wrought.....fingers*—went on sewing clothes with her best skill. *To stop.....work*—Sunday is the Sabbath day for Christians. It is observed as a day of rest. *He was troubled in sleep*—Michael had broken and disturbed sleep, so he muttered in his sleep. *All his hopes were gone*—Michael had a look of blank despair. *None to remember*—none to console us in our calamities. *Jocund*—cheerful. *Told her fears*—confessed her anxieties to Luke. *Recovered heart*—felt comforted.

Explanation—*The youth.....heart*—Isabel realised that her husband was offering inwardly at the prospect of separation from his son. So she asked Luke not to go, lest Michael might die of grief. Luke however, laughed away her fears. He told his mother that his father would not die for he himself wanted him to go. Isabel was comforted.

Fare—food. *A Christmas fire*—either it was the day of Christmas or a blazing fire like that on the Christmas day.

Lines 304--321. Gist. A letter came from Michael kinsman, saying that he would do his best for Luke. Michael had peace of mind when Isabel agreed to Luke's going the next day. *Ensuing week*—the week that followed.

Explanation.—*The house.....spring.* The whole family looked as cheerful as a grove of trees looks cheerful in spring birds.

[Wordsworth similes are generally drawn from nature]. *Kind assurances*—promises. *The expected letter*—the reply

to Michael's query. *Forthwith*—atonce. *Ten times over*—this was because the letter brought with it hopes of better days. *Nor was.....Luke's*—Luke was full of joy and pride at the prospects of going to London. He had the proudest heart on that day in England. *If at.....go*—if he were to leave in a day's time. *Forgotten*—Isabel meant to say that in her hurry to make preparations for Luke's journey she might forget or overlook many things that the boy needed. *Michael was at ease*—Michael had peace of mind.

Lines 322--382.—*Gist*—In a valley nearly Michael collected a heap of stones to build a sheepfold. He took Luke to this place and told him how he had been a good and kind father to him. He added that he could not bear the idea that the property should go to a stranger.

Deep—because enclosed within mountains. *Designed*—planned. *Sheep-fold*—an enclosure of sheep. *Tidings*—news. *Melancholy loss*—sad loss that he had to sustain in consequence of his having stood security for his nephew. *Streamlets' edge*—margin of the small river. *Thrown together*—huddled together; accumulated. *Ready for the work*—ready to be used in the construction of the sheep-fold. *Thitherward*—in the direction of the spot where the stones had been heaped up. *With full heart*—(1) with heart charged with affection or choked with emotion (2) joyously.

Explanation.—*Thou wert.....joy*—Michael takes Luke to the sheepfold and addresses these words to him. He says that he has built all his hopes upon Luke even before he was born, and that all the days of his life he has been a source of joy to him. Luke's birth has fulfilled all the expectations of Michael.

Our two histories—our two lives, i. e.; the life that we two had been leading together. Michael would tell Luke something about his own life and something about his sons's life and how the two lives had been intimately connected. *Touch on*—refer to.

Explanation.—*It will do.....know of*—Michael would tell Luke something of their past history of which Luke is ignorant. This, Michael said, would do good to Luke, for it would keep him away from temptations. Michael would tell

Luke how fondly he has been upon Luke from his birth onwards. If Luke should know of the pains which Michael took for him he would never go astray.

Camest into the world—were born. *Befall to*—'Befall' is transitive, hence 'to' is redundant. *Blessings... thee*—your father fervently blessed you and prayed for you. *With increasing love*—as you grew up, my love for you increased. *Living ear*—ear of living person. *Natural tune*—the joyful prattle of a child.

Explanation.—*Never to living.....breast.* No father could have felt more delighted at the sweet songs of cries that Luke as a baby gave out for the first time when he lay by the fire side, because he had spent all his life in expectation of a child. Michael would often sit and listen to the sounds that his baby son made while sucking the mother's breast. To fond Michael's fatherly ears those sounds, though inarticulate, seemed like sweetest of music.

Else—otherwise (i. e., if I had led an indoor life. *Else I think.....knees*—Michael means to say that if he were not obliged by his work to go out, he would have been always with his baby, Luke dandling him. *Playmates*—companions at play (in spite of the great difference in age). *In us.....together*—Michael the old father played with Luke the young boy. Michael had to become a child in spirit to play with Luke. *Nor with me.....know*—you found in my company all the fun of amusement that a young boy should enjoy. *Luke.....manly heart*—Luke had no feminine weakness. *Sobbed loud*—wept with convulsive gasps. *Grasped*—caught hold of. *Do not take it so*—do not be so much moved by my words. *Even to the utmost*—to the best of my ability. *These are.....speak*—I should rather drop the matter.

Explanation.—*Here in I but.....other's hands,* Michael means to say that his parents had been kind and good to him and he simply continued the same tradition in the case of Luke. He received the gift of kindness from his parents, and he repaid his gratitude to them by proving a good and kind father to Luke.

Beyond the common life—exceeding the average span of man's life. Michael was eighty-four, while the average limit

is seventy. *Them*.....*youth*—my parents. *Both sleep together*—Both my father and mother are buried together in the family burial ground, *As all*.....*done*—following the example of their forefathers. *Their time*—i. e., their time to die. *Loth*—unwilling. *To give*.....*mould*—to resign their bodies to the common grave of the family. *I wished*.....*lived*—Michael here makes his son realise the tradition of the family, and his cherished desire that Luke should love his birth place and profession, so that often making up the loss of his fortune he would come back and settle in his paternal estate.

Explanation.—*But 'tis a long*.....*years*. Michael tells Luke the story of his life. It was many years ago that he had started in his life. He had toiled for sixty years: and he found that at the end of sixty years he had been able to earn but little wealth for his family.

Burthened—burdened or encumbered with debts. *Not more*.....*mine*—I could not release more than half my estate. *My inheritance*—the fields that I inherited from my father, but were encumbered. *Toiled and foiled*—worked hard ceaselessly. *God blessed*.....*work*—God rewarded my toil, and I was able to redeem my property from the mortgage. *It looks*.....*Master*—After I have recovered my land by the sweat of my brow, I cannot bear to think that it should pass into the possession of another.

Explanation.—*Heaven forgive*.....*go*. Michael says that he does not know whether his plan of sending away Luke to London would be good or bad, though he is acting from the best of motives. He believes that it would do good for Luke if he goes to London. But if some evil befalls Luke, and if his plan proves harmful to Luke in the future, surely God would pardon Michael.

Lines 383—430.—*Gist.*— Michael asked Luke to lay the foundation stone of the sheep-fold, so that the foundation-stone might serve as a solemn agreement between them. Luke obeyed his father. The next morning Luke began his journey amidst the good wishes of his neighbours.

After a short silence—This shows Michael was overcome with emotion. *A work for us*—The sheepfold was to be built

by both of us jointly. *Resumed*—continued. *A work for me*—Now this is to be built by me singly. *For me*—for my sake. *Be of good hope*—be cheerful. *To see a better day*—our present misfortune will pass away and we shall have properous days. This shows the optimism of Michael *Hale*—healthy. *Do thou.....mine*—Do the duty assigned to you and I will fulfil my part of the duty. *Many tasks.....thee*—many jobs which were meant for you. *Wont*—accustomed. *Heights*—mountain heights. *Before I knew etc.*—before you were born. *Heaven bless thee*—May God bless you *Thy heart.....hopes*—you have been eagerly looking forward to the new life you are going to begin in London, and you are excited with dreams and hopes of the future. *It should be so*—It is but natural that you should be elated with hopes. The future is painted in rosy hues to the eye of youth. *I knew.....love*—I was quite sure that you had not the least desire to leave me. You have been attached to me by bonds of love. *What will.....us*—Nothing will be left to Michael and his wife, for all their affection has been centred in Luke. They will feel sad and lonely.

Explanation—*Thy heart.....us*. Michael had noticed that for two weeks Luke had been looking forward to his visit in London. Luke had been thinking of his future prospects with a mind full of hopes. This caused a secret pain to Michael. But Michael comforted himself and told Luke that there was nothing wrong in the excitement felt by him, for it was but natural for a young man to have rosy dreams of the future. Michael knew that Luke loved him, and there was a deep and tender love between father and son, so when Luke would be gone, his parents would feel very sad and lonely.

But I.....purposes—But I have been digressing from my main subject namely, you laying down the foundation-stone. *Corner stone*—the main stone over which the whole structure is raised: *Should evil men etc.*,—if evil men should happen to be in your company. *Think of me*—think of my love for you. *Of this moment*—of this sacred meeting between father and son; of this touching parting scene. *Hither.....thoughts*—direct your thoughts to this particular post

or to this sacred moment. *Strengthen thee*—give you strength and courage to face evils and temptations.

Explanation.—*When thou art.....good deeds*, These are some of Michael's parting words to his dear son Luke. Michael asked Luke to remember always the sacred moment of their parting. In London there would be many temptations; there would be many evil persons to tempt Luke. But Luke must not yield to temptations. Whenever evil should tempt him he should remember Michael's love for him, and also the sacred moment between father and son passed beside the brook of Greenhead Ghyll. Then Luke would be strong enough to resist temptation. Moreover, Luke should never forget the life of innocence that his ancestors had lived, and the good deeds they did because of their innocence. Michael thus provides three safeguards against Luke's falling into temptations—(1) the pathetic scene at the sheepfold, (2) Michael's love for Luke, (3) the family tradition.

For that cause—because of their innocence. *Bestir.....good deeds*—apply themselves to good or virtuous deeds. *A work.....here*—the sheepfold which is not built yet. *Covenant*—sacred contract; solemn agreement; spiritual pledge between father and son. *Whatever.....thee*—in whatever circumstances you may be placed by fate. *Bear thy.....grave*—I shall even remember you after my death. This shows Michael's intense affection for his son.

Explanation.—*Now, fare thee.....gave*. Michael concludes his address to Luke. He has appealed to his son to remember the examples of his virtuous ancestors in the midst of temptations in London. Then in a solemn tone Michael bade farewell to his son, Michael would build the sheepfold himself while Luke would be in London. When Luke would return from London he would see the sheepfold on the spot where he had laid the foundation stone. Let the sheepfold be a sacred contract between father and son, Michael assured Luke that he would always love Luke whatever might happen to him in future, and that he would remember his son even after his death.

Stooped—bent. *Broke*—burst out. *Hushed*—quiet. *Seeming peace*—apparently there was silence and peace in the

whole household, but really it was not so, for every one was feeling sorrow over the impending departure of Luke. *Pu* on a bold face—appeared cheerful though his mind was troubled. *Wishes*—good wishes. *Farewel' prayers*—parting prayers. *Followed*—attended. *He was out of sight*—Luke had left the village behind.

Lines 431—447. Gist. In the beginning Luke did well in his business but he soon took to evil ways and to hide his shape went to foreign lands.

Good report—favourable account of the progress of Luke. *Well-doing*—progress. *Wondrous news*—Luke's impressions of the city of London. *Housewife*—Isabel. *Phrased it*—put it. *Prettiest*—nicest. *Rejoicing hearts*—delighted hearts. *With confident.....thoughts*—in a happy and hopeful mood. *That valley*—where the sheepfold was to be built. *Took his way*—proceeded. *Luke began to slacken etc.*—Luke began to neglect his duty. It has been pointed out that the denouement of the story is abrupt, and the conclusion is not of proportion to the main body of the story. *Gave him self*—abandoned himself. *Dissolute city*—London which is full of vice and corruption. *Evil course*—life of sin; immoral life. *Ignominy and shame*—Luke was guilty of disgraceful immoral or dishonest act. *Drive*—compelled. *To seek.....seas*—Luke possibly went to America to save himself against the criminal law of England.

Lines 448—482. Gist. Love is source of strength. Michael stood the shock because of his deep love for Luke. Only he could not complete the sheep fold.

There is comfort.....love—It is the strong love of the heart which brings comfort in one's misfortune. *It will.....endurable*.—It will enable to bear misfortune. *Else*—otherwise i e., if there were no strength of love. *Overset the brain*—unsettle or unhinge the brain; make one mad.

Explanation.—*There is a comfort.....break.* The report of his son's disgraceful conduct was a heavy blow to Michael, but his deep love for Luke made him survive the shock. Michael had the comfort that he had loved his son dearly and done his duty to him. He loved his son even after his disgrace. His parental affection sustained him in

his misfortune. But for the strength of his love he would have gone mad or he would have died of a broken heart. Love is a great remedy against great sorrows. The story of Michael illustrates this moral.

Conversed etc—Wordsworth visited the place where Michael lived, long after the tragedy had taken place. *What he was*—what change came upon him as he heard the news of his son's disgrace. *Heavy news*—shocking news. *Bodily frame*—physical constitution. *Unusual*—remarkable. *He went.....wind*—he kept on loving his natural surroundings. He still enjoyed the various objects of Nature and listened to the music of the breeze. *His small inheritance*—his property which now dwindled because he had to pay off his nephew's debts by selling a part of it. *Hollow dell*—deep valley where the sheepfold was to be built. *Repair*—go. *'Tis not forgotten yet*—people still remember. *The pity.....Man*—the pity which all men felt for Michael.

Explanation.—*Tis believed.....stone.* When Michael heard the news of his son's moral downfall, he stood the shock by the strength of his love. The joy of his life departed from him. He went about his daily work but he had no heart in it. He worked on mechanically. The people of the place remembered old Michael with pity. They remembered that Michael often went to work at the sheepfold but they generally believed that Michael did not work at it—he would sit there silently, thinking only of Luke, and he would not lift even a single stone. [The unfinished sheep-fold now remained as a symbol of a broken pledge.]

His faithful dog—this is a sad comment on human nature which is 'faithless.' *Then old*—the dog had now grown old. *The length.....years*—for as long a period as seven years. *Wrought*—worked. *Survive*—live longer than; lived after her husband's death. *Went into a stranger's hand*—passed into the possession of a stranger. This completed the ruin of the family and what Michael feared most happened. This is called Iron of Fate. *Is gone*—has disappeared. *The plough share.....stood*—The ground on which the cottage stood has been ploughed and cultivated by the new owner. *Great changes.....neighbourhood*—the village has undergone considerable changes since the time of Michael. *Is left*—is

still standing. *Beside.....door*—by the door of the cottage in which Michael lived. *Remains*—ruins. *Boisterous*—tumultuous; noisy.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. 1. In what sense is 'Michael' a pastoral poem?

Ans. See Introduction (Michael as a pastoral poem.)

Q. 2. Show that 'Michael' illustrates the important characteristics of Wordsworths' Poetry.

Ans. See Critical Appreciation.

Note:—Specially the points:—(a) Wordsworth is a Lover of Nature. His love of nature led to his Love of Man. (b) Wordsworth draws his subject-matter of poetry from the ordinary life of peasants. (c) 'Michael' illustrates Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction according to which the language of poetry should be simple and intelligible to ordinary shepherds. (d) Wordsworth is not a good storyteller. He is lacking in a sense of proportion.

Q. 3 What do you learn about Wordsworths' views of nature from this poem?

Ans. See Introduction (Wordsworths' conception of Nature.) Note the points:—(a) Nature is a great teacher. Michael lived and worked constantly in the presence of nature. He owed his strength of character and dignity to Nature. (b) Wordsworths' interest in man. He loved the shepherds because they were a part and parcel of Nature.

Q. 4. Sketch the character of Michael.

Ans. See "characters."

Q. 5. Sketch the character of Luke.

Ans. See "characters."

Q. 6. Show how Michael was influenced by Nature.

Ans, Michael constantly worked in the presence of Nature. He looked after his sheep in the mountain sides. So he became familiar with the stern and majestic aspects of the mountains. He often risked his own life to save the sheep on the mountain heights in storm and mist. He was impressed not only by the solemn and august aspects of Nature but also by the mild aspects of Nature:

"And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
That green valleys, and the streams and rocks
Were things indifferent to the shepherd's thoughts."

The hills were associated with the many incidents of hardship and courage in Michael's life. The fields and hills had a story hold on his affections—it was "a pleasurable feeling of blind love."

The objects of Nature became dearer to Michael after the birth of Luke. His deep and tender affection for his son quickened his perception of beauty:

"That objects which the shephred loved before
Were dearer now? that from the boy there came
Feelings and emanations—things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind."

Q. 7. How did Michael prepare to meet the distressful tidings of his being called upon to pay off his nephew's debts.

Ans. See Paraphrase (Lines 207-255)

Q. 8. Give the substance of Michael's address to his son.

Ans. See Paraphrase (Lines 331-417).

On the evening before Luke left for London Michael took him to the spot in a valley, shut in by mountains, beside the brook of Greenhead Ghyll. Here Michael designed to build a sheepfold, and for that purpose had collected a heap of stones. It was here that Michael told the story of his life,—

Michael looked forward to the day when Luke was born; since then Luke had been his 'daily joy.' Luke slept away two days after he was born, and the father blessed him and prayed fervently for him. Michael's love grew as day after day passed. He thought that there could be no sweeter sound than the inarticulate sounds or prattle made by Luke at his mother's breast. He could have brought up Luke on his knees if he had not to work in the open field. When Luke was a growing lad the young and the old had played together in the fields. All this Michael told Luke, and Luke was moved to tears.

Then Michael told Luke the story of his own struggle

and industry. He had toiled for sixty years but he has not been able to make sufficient provision for the family. He toiled till he was forty and only then he was able to free his land. Then the trouble came. Michael had to sell off half his estate to pay off the debt of his nephew. He had decided to send Luke to London and set him upon business under a kinsman. He believed that Luke would earn sufficient money and redeem the ancestral estate.

Michael now pointed to the heap of stones and said that he would have to build the sheepfold by himself now that Luke would be away. Michael begged Luke to lay one stone for the sheepfold. He charged his son to do his duty while he would do his own. He requested his son to think of him and of this sacred moment of parting while in London. He should also remember the steady, honest and industrious life of his ancestors in order to guard himself against the evils and temptations of city life. Michael pointed out the foundation stone of the sheepfold laid by Luke would be a covenant, a spiritual bond between father and son.

Q. 9. What moral lessons can be derived from the poem ?

Ans. See Introduction (Moral Lessons in the Poem.)

Q. 10. Explain:—

- (1) It was the first.....abode (Lines 21-26)
- (2) Chile I was.....human life (27-33)
- (3) He heard the south.....for me (50-55)
- (4) I may truly.....endless industry (93-95)
- (5) But to Michael's.....fail (143-50)
- (6) And to his office.....help (187-89)
- (7) That from the boy.....again (200-203)
- (8) An evil man.....sorrow (236-240)
- (9) This scheme.....hope (274-278)
- (10) Even to the utmost.....(361-64)
- (11) I toiled.....master (377-380)
- (12) When thou art... ..good deeds (405-38)
- (13) Now, fare thee well.....grave (412-417)
- (14) There is a comfort.....heart (448-50)
- (15) It is believed.....stone (464-66)

Ans. See Notes.

KING ROBERT OF SICILY

A Note on the Author. H. W. Longfellow (1807—1882) lived in the Eastern States of North America. He paid many visits to Europe and acquainted himself with European life and literature. His works are of a varied character. He wrote many didactic pieces, *e. g.* *The village Blacksmith*, *The Building of the ship etc.*, *The Psalm of Life* is an oft quoted poem in English literature. He translated Dante's *Divine Commedia*. The poem in the selections occurs in his *Tales of a Wayside Inn*.

Longfellow is not a great poet and artist, but he appears to a wide circle of readers. He is the most popular poet of America. His popularity is due to several causes first, there is an innate simplicity in his poetry. Secondly, he deals with the universal emotions of love, pity, faith and hope. Thirdly the music of his poetry pleases the reader. Longfellow is at bottom a moralist. But the emotions he expresses are not personal but of general interest. Hence the moral element of his poetry does disgust the reader. Longfellow lacks originality but he is a narrative poet of great force and clearness.

Summary

On St. John's Eve King Robert of Sicily, brother of Pope Urbane and of Valmond, Emperor of Germany, sat in the church in a pompous manner, attended by his knights and squires. He heard the priests singing the magnificat. He caught the Latin refrain of the song and asked a learned clergyman what the refrain meant. The clergyman replied that the words signified the downfall of the mighty and the elevation of the humble. The king growled at these words and vaunted that no power could push him from his throne. He leant back on the chair and soon fell asleep lulled by the monotonous song of the priests, When he seemed to himself to wake, he found the church empty and dark.

[Here begins the dream of King Robert] The king groped towards the door and found the door locked. He uttered threatening words till the sexton thinking it might be some drunkard or evil spirit opened the door. The king leaped into the darkness and vanished like a spectra.

The king now stripped of his gorgeous robes rushed to his palace. He passed from hall to hall till he came to the banquet room. He found another king seated on the dais, wearing his robes, crown and signal-ring, and assuming the exact features of the king. It was an Angel who appeared in the guise of the king.

The king looked at the Angel amazed and called the Angel a usurper. The Angel replied that Robert was no king but the King's Jester who would henceforth wear the fool's uniform and be attended by an ape. The king was now pushed down the stairs of the halls, and received with mocking cheers by the knights and soldiers.

Next morning he found himself equipped with the fool's cloak and attended by an awkward ape.

Many days passed and the golden age came to Sicily. The Angel now reigned in the place of King Robert. The king was still defiant in spirits. When he met the Angel, he asserted his rights.

Three years passed. There came ambassadors from Emperor Valmond to King Robert, with the message that their brother Pope Urbane had invited them to the city of Rome on the occasion of the Easter festivity.

A procession attended by knights and menials passed towards Rome. Robert with Fool's dress on and riding on a horse also formed part of the procession. The ape sat behind him on horse back.

The Pope received the Angel with great ceremony thinking him to be the king. Robert burst through the crowd and appearing before the Pope informed him that he was the real king and his power had been usurped by an impostor. Emperor Valmond laughed and said that a mad man had been engaged as a fool by his brother. Robert, was then pushed back among the crowds.

The Holy week passed. On Easter Sunday the presence of the Angle who personated the king illumined the whole place and filled all men with a new religious enthusiasm. Even King Robert felt a spiritual inspiration and heard the rustle of the garments of Jesus Christ as though ascending heavenwards.

As the Easter festival was over, Valmond returned to Germany. The Angel came back to, Palermo. He sat on the throne in his great hall and heard the bell summoning people to prayer. He then beckoned to King Robert to come near and asked him if he still thought himself to be the King. Robert bowed down his head and meekly replied that he was a great sinner and liked to be shriven. The Angel smiled and a holy light emanated from his person. Through the open window could be heard the song of the monk, whose refrain signified the downfall of the mighty and elevation of the humble. Another tune was heard which signified that King Robert was indeed the king. King Robert now looked up and found himself all alone. He now woke up. His courtiers found him kneeling upon the floor and in deep meditation.

Moral Lesson,

The purpose of the poem is to justify the sermon—"He has put down the mighty, and exalted them of low degree." All earthly powers are vain. The king may vaunt that there is nobody to Push him down and deprive him of his earthly sovereignty. But his vaunts are all meaningless. He boasts, "I am the king" but he is proved to be "The King's Jester." It is only when he gives up his defiant spirits and humbly bows down before the Heavenly powers he enjoys his earthly authority. When King Robert no longer asserts his claims but meekly confesses his sins—"My sins as scarlet are," the Angel acknowledges the powers of the king—"I am an angel and thou art the king." The king who had defied all heavenly powers now kneels on the floor 'absorbed in silent prayer.' Pride goes before a fall while humility is rewarded. God pulls down in proud and raises the humble.

Critical Note.

Through mediaeval legend based on a supernatural machinery poet Longfellow has taught a moral lesson, namely that God humbles the proud and exalts the humble. Longfellow generally writes didactic poems, that is, poems with moral lessons. King Robert boasts of his kingly authority but through a supernatural agency he is cured of his illusions. In this poem we find a fusion of history and imagination

Longfellow was interested in the history and literature of mediæval Europe. The story of the poem relates to the period when the Normans before their conquest of England in 1066 gained a foot hold in the south of Italy and established a feudal state including the island of Sicily. There is a note of mediævalism in the poem—we have here the mediæval church, the mediæval superstition, the mediæval belief in asceticism.

This poem illustrates the important characteristics of Longfellow—his fondness for mediæval legend, his love of moral element, his simplicity of style.

The experiences of King Robert have been interpreted as a dream by some commentators. But we may treat the poem as a versified legend of the middle Ages. In that case it is a poem of the supernatural kind. If the poem is interpreted as a dream, it has a psychological interest. The king's dreams are the natural outcome of his thoughts on the sermon—"He humbles the great and exalts the humble."

Notes and explanations

Lines 1—26. *Paraphrase.* Robert King of Sicily, brother of Pope Urbane of Valmond, Emperor of Germany, being dressed in a gorgeous style, and attended by a large number of knights and squires (attendants of knights), sat in the church in a pompous and dignified manner, at the evening prayer held on 26th December, that is, the evening before the festival of St. John the Evangelist. He heard the priests singing the song of the virgin Mary, mother of Christ, of which the Latin burden and signified. "He has put down the mighty and exalted the humble" being sung several times, attracted his attention. He raised his head with a majestic pose and asked a learned clergyman the meaning of the Latin burden, of the song. The clergyman properly translated the Latin words which meant that God has cast down the haughty and rich people from their high seats and raised the men of humble position to high stations when the king heard these words, he sarcastically remarked that such words tended to excite discontent against the king, and could be uttered only by the priests in the Latin language (which is unintelligible to common people.) The king also declared

that the priests and the people should know that no authority (either of God or of man) could dethrone him. He reclined his seat, opened his mouth involuntarily from drowsiness and then fell asleep. The solemn and uniform notes of the song sung by the choir induced his sleep. When he awoke from sleep it has already grown dark. All men had left the hall. There was no light except that of a few candles burning dimly in front of the image of some saint.

Allemaine—Germany. *Apparelled*.....*attire*—dressed in gorgeous robes. *Retinue*—a band of followers. *Knights*—military follower. *Squire*—attendants on knight. *St. John's eve*—the evening before the festival of St. John the Evangelist, which takes place on 27th December. *St. Jonn's eve* 16th December. *At vespers*—at evening prayer. *Chant*—sing. *Magnificat*—the song of the Virgin Mary, mother of Christ. *Burden or refrain*—chorus of the song, the chief theme. *Caught*—understood. *Depos uit*.....*humiles*—The Latin expressions means "He has put down the mighty from their seat and exalted the humble." *Lifting up*—raising his head proudly with kingly dignity. *Learned clerk*—the clergyman who is versed in Latin. *What mean the words?*—what is the English meaning of those Latin words? *Made answer meet*—gave a suitable reply. *Put down*—humbled. *Mighty*—great; proud. *Pyt*.....*seat*—pulled down the great from their high position. *Exalted*—elevated; raised; *Them of low degree*—persons of inferior position. *There at*—at these words. *Muttered*—spoke indistinctly. *Scornfully*—in a spirit of contempt *Seditious words*—words which are likely to rouse a spirit of rebellion against the king.

Explanation. *It is well...throne*—The king was enraged to hear the meaning of the Latin words which meant that the mighty should be degraded from their high position and the humble should be elevated. He remarked in a tone of contempt that it was better that such words should be sung only by the priests in the Latin language. The words sung by the priests were likely to rouse popular feelings against the king; hence it was better that the words were in Latin which would not be intelligible to the common mass of people. The king defiantly added that there was no power who could degrade him from his high position.

Leaning back—supporting himself back on the chair. *Yawned*—opened his mouth in sleepiness. *Lulled*—induced to sleep. *Chant*—song. *Monotonous*—dull having the same chours and the same kind of tune. *Deep*—low and full. *The church was empty*—for the people had all left. *Save*—except. *Faint*—dim. *Glimtered*—emitted a dim light. *Saint*—the picture or image of some saint, before which candles are burnt in Roman Catholic Churches.

Lines 26—34. Paraphrase. King Robert being startled suddenly stood up and looked about. He could not see any living creatures or hear any sound. He felt his way in the dark towards the door but he found the door fastened with a lock. He shouted out, listened if any body responded, and then struck the door with hard blows. He cried out pronouncing violent threat and curses upon men and saints. The roof and walls reverberated his high words. It seemed as if dead elergymen were loudly mocking at him from their seats.

Started—got up being started or surprised. *Crope* towards the door—felt his way to the door through the darkness. *Locked*—fastened with a lock. *Knocked*—gave hard blows at the door. *Uttered*—spoke. *Awful threatenings*—terrible words of threat. *Complaints*—grumbblings. *Imprecations*—curses. *Re-echoed*—resounded. *Stalls*—seats.

Explanation.—*The sound..... stalls*—The king began to utter threats and curses and knocked at the door. But he did not find any response. He heard only the echoes of his words. It appeared to him that the priests were all dead, and they were mocking him from their graves.

Lines 35—48. Paraphrase. At last the officer in charge of the vessels and vestments of the church, heard from outside the noise of the shouts and blows of the king. He thought that thieves had entered the church hall, so he came with his lantern and asked who was it that was making the noise. Being almost suffocated with anger the king cried out. "Open the door, I am the king. Are you afraid of me?" The officer was afraid and uttered with a curse that it must be some reckless drunkard or even worse than that. He turned the key in the big lock and opened the wide door.

A man suddenly passed by the sexton. The man looked wild; he was half-naked, and had no hat or cloak on. Without looking at him and speaking any words, he jumped into the darkness of night outside and disappeared like an evil spirit.

Sexton—the official who is in charge of a church, often acting as grave-digger. *Tumult*—confused, noise. *House of prayer*—church. *Choked with rage*—unable to speak being overpowered with the emotion of anger. *Fiercely*—angrily. *Frightened*—terrified because he thought it might be some evil spirit. *Drunken vagabond*—an idle scamp under the influence of wine. *Worse*—worse than a reckless drunkard, i. e., a ghost. *Flung wide*—threw open. *Portal*—gate. *Rushed*—passed hurriedly. *At a single stride*—passing over with one long step. *Haggard*—wild-looking. *Cloak*—loose outer garment. *Turned*—looked back. *Vanished*—disappeared. *Like a spectre*—like an invisible ghost.

Lines 49—70. Paraphrase. King Robert who was deprived of his gorgeous robes and hat, who was sprinkled over with mud or foul matter, and was panting hard, and who was furious with a sense of injustice and insult, rushed forth into the streets till he reached the gate of his palace where he began to utter vehement threats. He hurried forward through the courtyard, and in his anger pushed aside his steward and by-servant who crossed his path. He quickly ascended the steps which were broad and which resounded as he placed his feet on them. In the night of the burning torches the king's face appeared to be as horrible as that of a ghost. He passed from hall to hall with such hurry that he did not find a moment even to breathe. He heard voices and cries but he did not pay attention to them. He came at last to the dining room, which was illuminated with light and filled with sweet scent. He found that on the high or principal table sat another king who put on his own robes, crown and ring containing his private seal. The king who sat in Robert's place, was exactly similar to Robert in appearance and stature, but he looked more bright and beautiful with the light of angel shining upon him. It was an angel who occupied Robert's place. The presence of the Angel filled the atmosphere

of the place with a celestial light. Though the angel appeared in the form of a man, the divine light revealed his identity. But nobody could recognise the disguised angel.

Despoiled—stripped. *Magnificent attire*—splendid robes. *Allemagne*—Germany. *Bare headed*—without his hat. *no-Breathless*—gasping for breath. *Besprent*—sprinkled over. *Mire*—mud. *Desperate*—ready to do any lawless deed. *With sense.....desperate*—being driven to reckless action from a sense that he has been grossly insulted. *Strode on*—walked on with long steps. *Thundered*—burst; came making a loud noise. *Rushed*—came hurriedly. *Courtyard*—space enclosed by buildings. *Thrusting*—pushing back. *Seneschal*—steward; official in charge of domestic affairs. *Page*—boy servant. *Hurried up*—quickly ascended. *Sounding stair*—flight of steps which resounded with his foot-steps. *White face*—bloodless, pale face. *Ghastly*—looking like a ghost. *In the torches glare*—in the bright light of the torches. *With-breathless speed*—gasping for breath. *Did not heed*—he did not attend to these cries. *Banquet room*—dining room. *Blazing*—brilliantly lighted. *Breathing with perfume*—full of scent. *Dais*—a platform on one end of the hall. *Robes*—clothes. *Signet ring*—ring containing his private seal. *King Robert's self.....height*—exactly looking like King Robert in every detail of appearance. *Transfigured*—changed in form. *Divine effulgence*—light or radiance of a celestial being. *Exaltation*—a lofty spiritual mood. *Piercing the disguise*—being visible through the hidden appearance of the angel. *Hidden*—disguised.

Explanation—King Robert's self.....recognise—King Robert found his own place occupied by another king who exactly resembled King Robert in stature and general appearance. The new king was an Angel. His presence filled the whole place with a heavenly radiance. Nobody could recognise the disguised Angel through superficial observation, but the angelic glow could be detected through close observation.

Lines 71—84 Paraphrase. King Robert who was now balked of his throne looked at the Angel for a moment without uttering any word or making any movement. Though the king looked with anger and surprise, the Angel

oked an him with at expression of pity; which is worthy of a celestial being. The Angel asked the king who he was and why he had come there. To this King Robert replied in a tone of contempt that he was the king and that he had come to demand his throne from a pretender who had usurped his throne. At these bold, insolent words the angry guests drew their swords. The Angel answered with a calm face that Robert was no longer the king but the king's fool who would henceforth wear the uniform of the professional fool, and who would have a monkey as his constant guide and advisor.

Speechless, motionless—without uttering a word or making a physical movement. *Throneless*—whose throne has been usurped. *Gazed*—looked instantly. *Who met.....eyes*—King Robert looked angrily and amazed at the Angel but the Angel looked at him with pity, the look of pity being characteristic of a celestial being. *Answered with sneer*—replied in a tone of contempt. *Claim my own*—demand my throne as a right. *Imposter*—a deceiver, one who assumes a false character. *Usurps*—seize wrongfully. *Audacious*—overbold; insolent. *With unruffled brow*—with a calm, undisturbed expression. *King's Jester*—professional fool attached to the king's court. *Scalloped cape*—a cloak with ornamental border, worn by the fool. *Counsellor*—advisor. *Ape*—monkey.

Explanation—*The Angel.....ape*—When King Robert claimed his throne, the Angel gravely remarked that he was no longer the king but the professional fool of the king, dressed in the fool's uniform, and having a monkey as his constant companion.

Lines 85-94. Paraphrase. The Angel further told King Robert that he would have to be at the beck and call of his servants and attendants. The king held out threats, then made a piteous appeal to the guests in the hall, but in vain. They turned deaf ears to his appeal and pushed him away from the hall and down the steps. A number of boy-servants ran before him laughing in a suppressed manner. As the guests opened the folding door, the king was disheartened to hear the wild laughter of the armed soldiers, and the sarcastic shouts 'Long Live the King' which resounded in the

arched hall.

Wait upon—attend; serve. *Henchman*—a follower. *Deaf to.....prayers*—not paying heed to King Robert's threatening words. *Thrust*—pushed him. *Tittering*—taunting. *A group.....pages*—a number of boy-servants who mocked at the ridiculous plight of the king. *His heart failed*—he lost his boldness of the spirits; he was damped in spirits. *With strange alarms*—with peculiar fright. *Boisterous laughter*—wild; noisy laughter. *Men-at-arms*—armed men, knights. *Vaulted*—with arched roof. *Chamber*—hall. *Roar and ring*—resound. *Mock plandits*—mocking cheers.

Explanation.—His heart.....the king—The King at first boldly claimed his throne but soon he felt depressed in spirits and was frightened to hear the wild mocking cheers of the armed knights. The whole roof of the hall re-sounded with the taunting cries of the people. They thought Robert as the King's jester and began to jeer at him. They sarcastically called, styled him king and wished him long life.

Long live the King—this is spoken ironically.

Lines 95—105. Next day the King waking in early dawn thought that it was only a dream that he had seen and no reality. But as he looked back he saw the straw making a rustling sound and the cap and bells used by the professional fool, lying beside his bed. The blank walls with changed colour stood round him. Near the walls the horses were chewing their food in the stables. In the corner an awkward looking monkey sat trembling and gibbering. The king now thought that it was no dream that he had seen but that the real world which he loved to live in had vanished into nothingness.

With the day's first beam—early dawn; just at sun rise. It was a dream—the experience seemed to be so strange that he did not believe it to be a reality. *Straw*—Robert was lying on a bed of straw. *Rustled*—producing a sound as of blown dead leaves. *Cap and bells*—which are worn by the professional jester. *Bare*—empty; having no pictures on it. *Discoloured*—having its colour changed. *Close by*—near. *Steeds*—horses. *Champing*—chewing fodder. *Stalls*—stables. *Revolting shape*—an awkward form, an unsightly

thing. Shivering—trembling. Chattering—gibbering; making meaningless sounds. Wretched ape—ugly-looking monkey.

Explanation. It was no dream.....touch—King Robert at first thought it was a dream and no real experience, for everything seemed to be so incredible. But now he realised that it was no dream, but all real experience. He saw to his great amazement that the world which he knew to be real and loved so much had been completely changed. The real world appeared to him to be an illusion.

Lines 105—126. *Paraphrase.* Many days passed by. The golden age came back to Sicily. The island of Sicily was blessed with plentiful corn and wine during the beneficent rule of the Angel. The giant Euceladus enjoyed rest within the bosom of the volcano (that is, the volcano became inactive) By this time King Robert of Sicily humbly reconciled himself to his fate. He became gloomy and knew no peace in his mind. He was dressed in the uniform of the professional fool. He looked perplexed with expressionless eyes. He was close-shaven above his ears just as the monks are. He was jeered at by the courtiers, scoffed at by the boy servants. He was constantly attended by the ape. He lived on the food which was rejected by others. But he still retained his haughty spirit. When the Angel met him, in a half serious and half mocking tone he asked Robert if he was the king. He spoke with a harshness mixed with softness, so that King Robert might feel excited and realise that he had as firmness and strength of purpose hidden under his outwardly gentle manner. At this King Robert could no longer check his emotion of grief. He raised his brow and returned the proud answer—"I am the King and there is none to dispute my authority."

Saturnine reign—reign of Saturn; i. e., the good old days of the past. Saturn was a Roman god. Under.....governance—during the regime or reign of the Angel. Island—Sicily. Danced.....wine—was blessed with a plentiful stock of corn and wine, and looked merry. Mountain's.....breast—in the interior of the volcano. Euceladus—was a giant who rebelled against Jupiter, King of Gods, and for this offence, was struck with a thunderbolt and buried

under Mount Etna, The smoke of the volcano, Mt. Etna was supposed to be breath of the giant. Was at rest—was sleeping.

Explanation. Under the Angel's.....rest—When the Angel reigned, the island of Sicily was blessed with peace and plenty. There was an abundance of crops and wine. Even the elements became quiet. The volcano Mt. Etna no longer emitted their smoke and fires. The giant Euceladus according to Greek mythology, lay buried under Mt. Etna and his breath was supposed to be the smoke of the volcano. In the golden age of peace the giant of Mt. Etna was believed to be sleeping, that is the volcano fires became dim.

Meanwhile—in the meantime. Yielded to his fate—submitted to his lot. Sullen—gloomy and angry, Disconsolate—having no peace of mind; restless. Motley—checkered of various colours. Jesters—professional fools. Bewildered—puzzled. Vacant stare—blank; meaningless look Shorn—shaven. Unsubdued—haughty; arrogant. Half in earnest etc—half seriously and half mockingly. Sternly—with severity. Tenderly—with pity. Scabbard—outer case of the sword; here, outward nature which was as soft or humble as velvet.

Explanation. That he might feel.....steel—King Robert was humbled. In order that he might feel that he had a strong and firm mind within in spite of his outward humiliation; that is, in order to rouse him to fury, the Angel asked him if he was the King.

Held a sword of steel—held a strong and hard sword, that is, possessed a strongly determined mind, though outwardly he appeared to be gentle. Passion of woe—emotion of grief. In resistless overflow—like an unchecked torrent, Fling—throw. Lifting forehead—this is an expression of arrogance.

Lines 127—162. *Paraphrase.* About three years passed, when there came famous representatives from Valmond; Emperor of Germany to King Robert, they informed King Robert that Pope Urbane invited him and his brother (Valmond) by letter to come immediately to his city of Rome on Holy Thursday (i. e., Thursday before Good Friday) The

Angel (who personated the King) received his guests (ambassadors) joyfully and gave them presents of undergarments ornamented with needle work and loose cloaks lined with rich fur and most costly rings and jewels. Then he went with them over the sea into the charming land of Italy, whose natural beauty was heightened by the artificial decorations of the procession which consisted of fur, loose outer garments, saddle clothes, movement of ornamented bridle gilded goading instruments.

Among the servants who attended the sham procession King Robert rode upon a horse of mixed white and black colour which moved in an awkward manner. He wore a loose outer garment made of box-tails, which fluttered in the wind. Behind him sat his companion, the grave-looking ape. The King was an object of fun to the people of the localities through which he passed. Pope Urbane received them with great ceremony and sound of bugles in the space in front of the Cathedral of St. Peter in Rome. The pope blessed and embraced the King (Angel). He was full of religious ardour and of the grace of Christ, which descended to the Pope through Christ's Apostles. As the Pope cordially welcomed the Angel without knowing his identity, King Robert who played the clown suddenly rushed through the crowd of people and cried out. 'I am the King, look at me, I am your brether, King of Sicily. The man who appears in my image before you is a cheat disguised as the real king. Do you not recognise me? Are you not prompted by your natural instinct to recognise in me your kinsman?

Ambassadors—representatives. Of great repute—famous. Pope Urbane—he was also a brother of King Robert. The pope is the head of the Roman Catholic Church. Summoned—invited. Forthwith—immediately. Holy Thursday—the Thursday before Good Friday. Embroidered—ornamented with needle-work. Vests—undergarments; waist-coats. Mantles—loose cloaks. Ermine—fur of an animal like a weasel. Lovely land—Italy has charming natural scenery. Resplendent—shining. Cavalcade—procession of persons on horse back. Plumes—feather ornaments consisting of feathers or horse hair. Cloak—loose outer garment. Housings—horse-

cloth. Stir—movement. Spur—pricking instrument attached to a horseman's heel.

Explanation. Then he departed.....spur—Italy has a beautiful natural scenery. When the splendid procession of persons on horseback passed, the land of Italy appeared to be all the more beautiful. The natural beauty of the place was enhanced by the artificial beauty of the procession which consisted of men who wore feather ornaments, shook the ornamented reins of the horses, sat on saddle cloths, and urged the horses with pricking instruments.

Menials—servants. In mock state—not. Piebald—irregularly marked with black and white. Steed—horse. With shambling gait—walking in an awkward manner without lifting the feet. Of fox tails—made of the bushy hair of foxes. Flapping—fluttering. Solemn—grave looking. Demurely—quietly. Perched—seated. Making huge merriment—causing a general laughter among people. Blare—loud sound. Bandered trumpets—wind-instruments fitted with flags. St. Peter's square—space in front of the Cathedral of St. Peter in Rome. Benediction—blessings. Fervent—warm hearted. Full of apostolic grace—inspired with the grace of Christ, which had passed to the Popes of Rome through the Apostles or disciples of Christ. Congratulations—expressions of joy. Entertained—received cordially. Unawares—without knowing that it was the wrong person he was welcoming. Bursting—coming hurriedly. Wears my semblances—assumes my form. Impostor—cheat; pretender. Voice within—natural instinct. Akin—related.

Explanation—This man.....akin? King Robert finding his brother Pope Urbane welcoming the Angel, rushed through the crowd and told the Pope that he was his real brother and not the person whom he was welcoming. The Angel was completely disguised as King Robert. The Pope mistook him as his brother and welcomed him. So King Robert who appeared as a clown asked the Pope to consult his own conscience and natural instinct, and recognise him as his own nearest kinsman.

Lines 163—180. *Paraphrase.* The Pope silently but with uneasy expressions looked at the calm face of the Angel. Emperor Valmond laughed and remarked that it

was funny that his brother had kept an insane person as his court-jester. The poor clown (King Robert) being disappointed and in utter humiliation was pushed back among the crowd. The week before Easter was celebrated with great pomp. On Easter Sunday the sky shone bright. Even before sunrise the brilliant appearance of the Angel illuminated the city, and inspired men with new religious feelings, and with a sincere faith that Christ had really risen from the grave. Even the clown (King) lying on his straw bed looked on the unusual brightness of the day with wild eyes. He felt within him a power not experienced by him before. He knelt down on the floor of his room and heard the rustling sound of the clothes of Jesus Christ as he passed through the silent atmosphere and rose upwards to heaven.

With trouble mien—with a look indicating his uneasy feelings. Countenance—face. Serene—calm. A strange sport—a fun.

Explanation—The Pope.....court--When Robert in the Fool's guise appeared before the Pope and said that he was the real King and the Angel was the usurper, the Pope felt uneasy in his mind, for perhaps through the disguise he saw marks of divinity in the Angel's face, Emperor Valmond wanting in spiritual insight could not see any special signs of divinity in the Angel. He thought the Angel to be the real King and the King in the Fool's guise to be a mad man.

Baffled—disappointed, failing to get a hearing from the Pope. Hustled back—pushed back. Populace—crowd. In solemn state—with proper ceremonies. Holy Week—the week before Easter, when the suffering and crucifixion of Christ are commemorated. Easter—festival of the Resurrection of Christ. Gleamed—shone. Presence—appearance. Fervour—religious zeal.

Explanation.—The Presence.....again—On the day of the festival of the Resurrection, the people were inspired with a religious ardour. They felt that Christ had really risen from the grave. They did not merely observe the Resurrection as a formal ceremony, but they experienced it as a reality. The city looked unusually bright even before

sunrise on the Easter Sunday. All this was due to the appearance of the Angel.

Haggard—wild-looking. Unwonted splendour—unusual brightness.

Explanation.—He felt.....before—The poet describes the effect of the presence of the Angel. The presence of the Angel imparted an extraordinary brightness to the place. King Robert in the guise of the Fool saw this unusual brightness, and experienced within himself the stringe of spiritual feelings. So he knelt down on the floor of the hall in order to pray.

Rushing garments—the rustling sound made by the clothes of Jesus Christ as he rose to heaven from the grave. Lord—Christ. Sweep—pass quickly or magnificently.

Lines 181—210. *Paraphrase.* The visit ended. Valmond returned to Germany. The Angel started for Italy. Again, the land was made to look bright by the brilliant procession of his attendants as it passed along the towns of Italy to Salerno and from there across the sea. He once more reacedd Palmero's wall and sat on the throne in his great hall. He heard the church bell summoning people to prayer. It seemed that there was a communication between the earth and better world, heaven. He made a sign with his fingers and asked King Robert to come near. He ordered the other men to leave the place. When the Angel and the King were alone, the Angel asked Robert whether he was the king. The King Robert bent down his head, made a sign of the cross upon his breast and answered humbly, "you know best whether I am the king. My soul is deeply stained with sin. Let me go away from this place to some monastery where I might repent of my sins. Let me walk with bare foot across the stones as a measure of penance till my sinful soul be purified, The Angel smiled and from his glowing face emanated a heavenly light which made the place look bright. Through the open window they heard the monks singing loud and clear notes in the near chapel (subordinate place of worship,) which were audible in spite of the noise and uproar of the public street. The words sung by the monks were—"God has humbled the mighty and elevated the humble." Through the song was heard a second tune which vibrated

like the music of a single string—"I am an Angel, and you are the King."

Visit—visit of King Robert and Emperor Valmond to the city of Rome. **Danube's shore**—Germany. **Homeward**—towards Italy. **Made resplendent**—made bright; illuminated. **Train**—band or procession of followers. **Flashing**—passing in a brilliant manner. **Thence**—from that place. **Palermo**—chief city of Sicily under Norman rule. **Angelus**—a bell which is rung thrice a day (at 6 A. M., at noon and at 6 P. M.) to call people to repeat a prayer the first word of which is 'Angelus' in memory of the incarnation of Christ. **Convent**—of building for a community of monks or nuns, **Monastery**.

Explanation.—As if.....ours—When the Angel came back to Palermo, he heard a bell from the towers of a monastery, summoning people to utter a prayer. The sound of the bell coming from a holy place of worship indicated that there was a communication between the palace of the king and a spiritual world.

Beckoned—made a sign with his finger. With a gesture—giving hints with a movement of the limbs. **Bade the rest retire**—ordered the others to leave the place. **Crossed**—made the sign of a cross with his hands. The cross is a symbol of Christianity. King Robert prayed for the grace of Christ, hence he crossed his hands on his breast. **Scarlet**—deep red. **My sins as scarlet are**—my soul is deeply tainted with sin. The expression is borrowed from the Bible (*Isaiah*.) **Cloister**—monastery, convent. **Penitence**—repentance. **Stones.....heaven**—these refer to the hardships of monastic life which lead to eternal happiness in heaven. **Barefoot**—without shoes on. **Guilty**—sinful. **Till my.....shriven**—till I am made to fully confess my sins.

Explanation.—Thou knowest.....shriven—King Robert now became humbled. When the Angel asked him whether he still thought himself to be the king, Robert humbly replied (without no longer trying to claim his rights) that the Angel knew best what his real position was. The king was now sincerely repentant. He said that his heart was deeply stained with sins, and he would like to retire to some monas-

tery where he would undergo severe penance and make himself fit for heavenly life.

Radiant—bright. Illumined—brightened. Monks—members of a religious community of men living apart under vows. Chant—sing. Chapel—a subordinate place of worship. Stir and tumult—noise; uproar; disturbance. Put down—humiliated. Exalted—elevated; raised. Them of low degree—persons of low position. Melody—a series of musical notes arranged to make a tune. Throbbing—trembling notes. I am.....king—the Angel restores the king to his rights after having tried him in various ways.

Explanation.—Above the stir.....the King—The Angel is satisfied with the king's penitence. So he would now give back the rights to the king: He makes the king hear again the music of the chapel. The monks repeat the old burden—"God has humbled the proud, and raised the humble." The king also hears another vibrating tune which sent forth the notes that the Angel would return to his own position in heaven and allow the king to enjoy his own rights on earth.

Lines 211—216. *Paraphrase.*—King Robert who was standing close to throne, raised his bent down eyes and found himself all alone, dressed in furred mantle and gold clothes. When the courtiers came they found him in the posture of kneeling down and praying silently.

Apparelled—dressed. Examined mantle—loose cloak ornamented with fur. Absorbed—engrossed. Absorbed... ..prayer—deeply meditating upon spiritual things. When the courtiers came—if the whole thing was a dream, the courtiers came when the king awoke from his sleep.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. 1. Tell the story King Robert of Sicily—how he was humbled.

Ans. See Summary.

Q. 2. What moral lesson do you derive from the poem?

Ans. See Introduction.

Q. 3. Write a Critical Note on the Poem.

Ans. See Critical Notes.

Q. 4. Explain:—

- (a) He has put down.....degree (Lines 14—15)
- (b) 'Tis well.....throne (Lines 17—20)
- (c) The Angel.....ape (Lines 81—84)
- (d) Under the Angel's.....rest (Lines 107—10)
- (e) And when the Angel.....steel (Lines 119—22)
- (f) Do you.....a kin (Lines 161—62)
- (g) And Easter.....heaven' ward (Lines 170—80)
- (h) My sins.....shriven (Lines 197—200)
- (i) And through.....king (Lines 208—210)

Ans See Notes.

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